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JAPAN

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Written by

Eminent Japanese Authorities and Scholars

Edited by Captain F Brinkley of Tokyo Japan

With an Essay on Japanese Art by Kakuzo Okakura

Director of the Imperial Art School at Tokyo Japan



SECTION SEVEN

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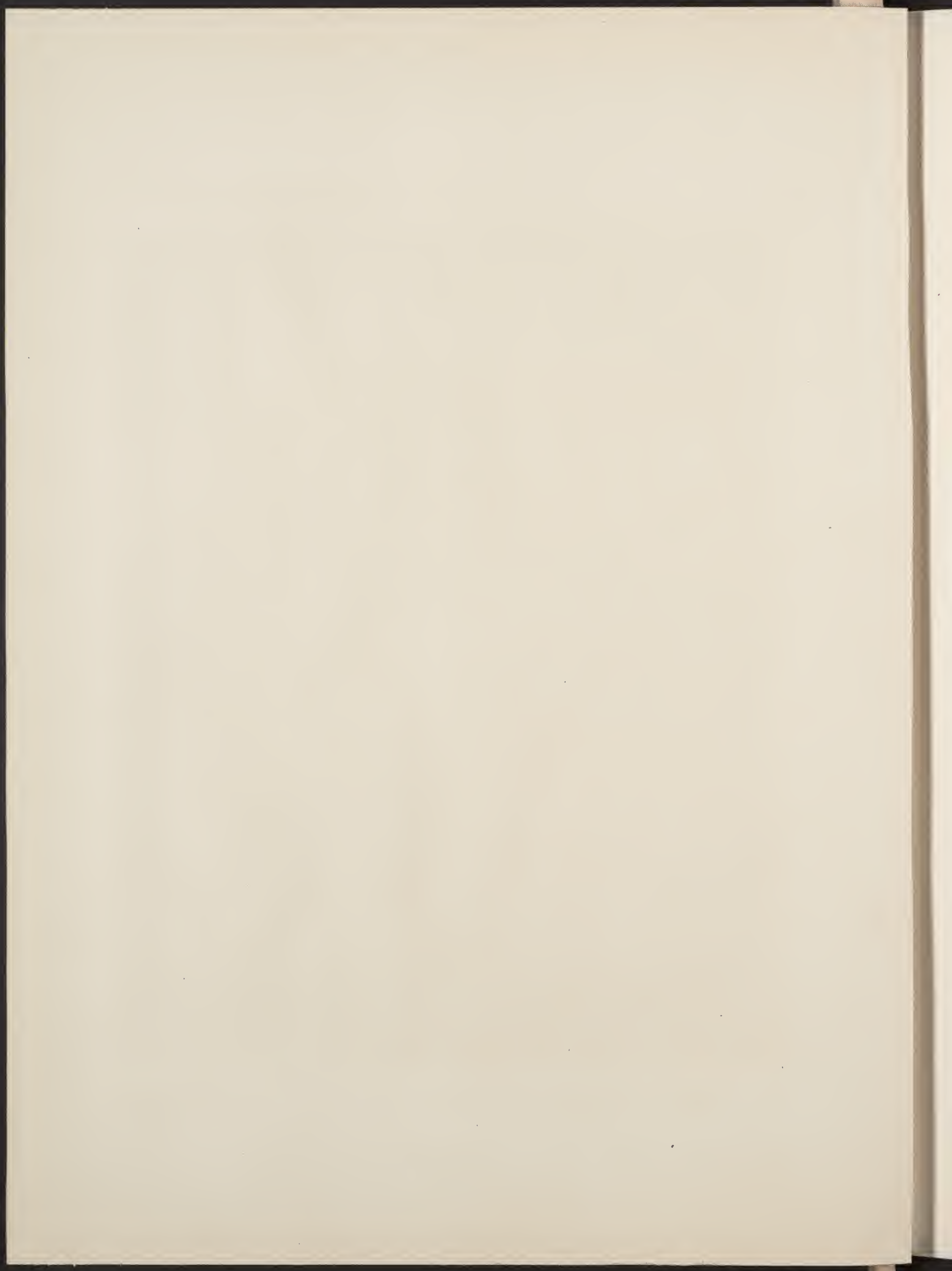
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XI.

FESTIVALS.



MODERN Japan is a country of traditional festivals; "acts of worship" the people call them, and they certainly have their foundation in a religious observance, but so far as general revelry, feasting and rejoicing are concerned, they present all the features of a *fête*, or even of a carnival. Annually or biennially the tutelary deities of a particular parish are taken out for an airing and the whole of the parishioners participate in the picnic. That is the most accurate definition that can be briefly given of the *matsuri*, to which Western writers have already devoted so many pages of description. The "worship of the deities" and the "administration of State affairs" used to be synonymous. Both were called *matsuri*, and both continue to be so called by the vulgar, though distinctive terms now find a place in the vocabulary of the literate. If, then, religious rites performed by the sovereign within the precincts of the palace insured the successful conduct of national business, the same principle prompted the people to invoke, by similar means, heaven's influence in the cause of household prosperity, industrial success, and individual happiness. History does not indicate the origin of the idea that to carry the gods in triumphal procession was the most fitting form of popular devotion. But history does show that sackcloth and ashes were never credited with any attractions in the eyes of the supernatural powers, and that the Japanese, even in very early ages, judged the brighter aspects of life to be as pleasant to immortals as to mortals. We obtain that knowledge of the nation's mood incidentally and not very agreeably. Annalists tell us, not of the glories of the *matsuri*, but of its abuses. As early as the eighth century, the spring and autumn festivals of the North Star had to be officially interdicted because of immoral license on the part of the devotees, and a similar prohibition became necessary a hundred years later when the people's methods of asking for blessings had become so extravagant that there stood in every street in Kyoto a "treasury" decorated with pictures of the "Seven Gods of Fortune," and a pair of images before which incense was burned and flowers were offered amid circumstances that should sometimes have repelled rather than propitiated the deities. Indeed, any one visiting the great shrines of Ise to-day, will be surprised to find that Lais opens her doors to the pilgrim almost within sight of the sacred groves, and that to accept her invitation does not disqualify him in his own eyes, nor in the eyes of any one else, for the subsequent achievement of his pious purpose. A single act of lustration restores

his moral as well as his physical purity, and with such an easy remedy in sight, the sins of the flesh seem only transiently hurtful. It is not to be supposed, however, that unsightly excesses are obtrusive features of the *matsuri*. On the contrary, they are for the most part conspicuous by their absence. History's mention of them notes the exception, not the rule, and is referred



PICKING FLOWERS.

to here merely as indicating that the gala spirit presided at these festivals twelve or fifteen centuries ago just as prominently as it presides now.

The people enjoy and exercise all the freedom of hosts at these big picnics. Having duly provided for the deity, or deities, in whose honor the display is primarily organized, the parishioners consider themselves at liberty to entertain any other guests they please to summon from the realm of spirits or the region of allegory. For the accommodation of each principal and each accessory deity there is a sacred palanquin, a *mikoshi*. It is a shrine on wheels; a shrine covered with black lacquer, undecorated save that the insignia of the inmate are blazoned in gold on the panels of the doors, and that the ends of the pillars and roof-tree are wrapped in finely chased and richly gilt copper. Before and behind the shrine stand *torii* of rose-red lacquer; a balustrade of the same color encircles it, and on the roof perches a

golden phoenix with outspread wings. The effigy of the deity is placed within this shrine in sacred seclusion, and to fifty men wearing sacerdotal vestments the duty of bearing the *mikoshi* is intrusted. But there is a difference in the people's treatment of their own special guests. These are not enclosed in the gloom of a shrine; they are mounted on high, overlooking the multitude of merrymakers and looked up to by them, and they ride each on a "car of gentle motion" (*nerimono* or *dashi*), a magnificent and colossal affair, its dimensions and gorgeousness affording a measure of the piety and prosperity of the parish. Described in simplest outline, the *dashi* is a rectangular wooden house mounted on a four-wheeled wagon. As for its details, they defy description. From sill to eaves it is a mass of elaborate carving and rich decoration. Brilliant brocades, portly silk tassels, snow-white *go-hei* and wreaths of gold-and-silver flowers fill the intervals between deeply chiselled diapers, flights

of phoenixes, processions of tortoises and lines of dragons. Immediately under the roof, and thus raised some fifteen feet above the street, a broad platform affords space for fifty or sixty people, and springing from pyramidal drapery at the centre of the artistically carved ridge pole, a tapering pillar of great height supports a canopied bracket for the figure of the sacred guest to whom the *dashi* is dedicated. It is impossible to convey in words any adequate idea of the grace of proportion and sobriety of grandeur sometimes attained in the construction and ornamentation of these cars. As for the guests whose effigies are thus carried aloft, they belong, for the most part, to the galaxy of national heroes or the catalogue of industrial and commercial symbols. Each parish naturally has its own particular pets and its own special obligations. For example, the festival of Sano, one of Tokyo's great biennial carnivals, is held in a year designated by the sign of the cock and the monkey in the two cycles.¹ Hence there is a *dashi* for each of these zodiacal conceptions. There are also *dashi* for Benten, the goddess of matrimony; for Kasuga Riujin, the god of the sea; for Shizuka Gozen, the brave mother of Yoshitsune; for Kamo, the Kyoto deity; for Tomyo Ichirai Hoshi, the renowned priest; for Kumasaka Chohan, the prince of mediæval burglars; for Jingo, the conquering empress; for the treasure ship with its crew, the Seven Gods of Fortune; for Ushiwaka and Sojobo, the young hero and his holy fencing master; for a hammer and a weight; for a big saw; for a tea-whisk; for a whaling junk; for an axe and sickle, symbols of the crafts, trades and occupations most affected by the inhabitants of the districts through which the procession winds its leisurely way on every alternate 15th of June (old calendar). The tutelary deities of the Sano district, when not taking part in these periodical picnics, inhabit a shrine on the summit of a profusely wooded hill



ARRANGING FLOWERS.

¹ Time used to be measured in Japan by cycles of sixty years. There were also "year periods" of arbitrary length, determined generally by the reign of a sovereign. The *Meiji* period, or "era of enlightenment," which began at the Restoration in 1867, is an example of these arbitrary divisions. For the purpose of constructing the sexagenary cycle, two separate series of symbols were used, one of ten, the other of twelve, signs. The former consisted of the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal and water), each element having a "senior" and a "junior;" the latter, of the twelve zodiacal signs (rat, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, goat, ape, cock, dog and bear). The method of combining the two series of symbols so as to construct a cycle of sixty years, need not be described here.

approached by an avenue of cherry trees and tended by Buddhist and Shinto priests in coöperation. But the effigies that ride on the *dashi* and the *dashi* themselves are kept in the houses of leading citizens. Each car, each figure, each symbol, has its history, and every properly educated parishioner knows that history. He can tell how the finely modelled *Kankodori* (cock on drum), kept in Odemma-cho, has five-hued plumage, whereas the Kanda cock is pure white; how the monkey, which ought to take precedence of the cock, if the order of the terrestrial and celestial cycles were strictly observed, was obliged, by edict of the *Shogun*, to cede the *pas* to its bright-feathered companion; how two lifelike monkeys, a male and a female, emerge alternately from their retreat in Koji-machi¹ to take their places in the procession, but how neither can compare with the wonderful monkey of Minamitemma-cho,¹



IMPERIAL SUMMER PALACE AT HAKONE.

Overlooking Hakone Lake and in full view of Fujiyama.

modelled in the old days by that peer of puppet-makers, Hyoshi Washihei, of which, alas! only the nose and eyes now remain, but which has a not greatly inferior successor, the work of Kakumuro Eiga; how in Koji-machi there is also preserved a monster elephant, fashioned three and a half centuries ago by a Korean craftsman, and how it used once to be a prominent object in the procession, three men within each leg, and a band of musicians in Korean costume preceding it. The genuine Tokyo man—the *Edokko*, or child of Edo, as he loves to call himself—and the orthodox citizen of aristocratic Kyoto have a thousand traditions to relate about these festivals, a thousand respectful tales to tell about their paraphernalia, and each city regards them as the red-letter day of its chronicles. It will not fall to the lot of many of our readers to see one of the great *fêtes*, and, indeed, their glory, like the

¹ The name of a street in Tokyo.

LOTUS FLOWERS AT KAMAKURA.

"If thou be born in a poor man's hovel but have wisdom, then shalt thou be like the lotus flower growing out of the mud."—Japanese Proverb.

In the decorative art of India the lotus flower is used especially as a support to the figure of a divinity or deified personage. Similar representations in Chinese and Japanese art seem to be derived directly from India, and thus the lotus is associated with the religion of Buddha.







glory of so many of Japan's old institutions, is rapidly passing away. Let us then set down the order of the Sano procession:

Two large and two small *hata* (strips of white cotton cloth, from one and one half to two feet wide and from ten to thirty feet long, fastened sailwise to bamboo poles and having the names of the tutelary deities inscribed in immense ideographs).

A glaivesman and a spear-bearer.

Two big drums carried by eleven men.

Two men with *hyoshi-gi* (wooden blocks for striking together).

Two flautists.

A Dog of Fo (*Shishi no Kashira*), borne by twenty-four men.

A *Shinto* priest on horseback.

Three gigantic spears, borne by thirty-two men.

A *Shinto* priest on horseback.

The sacred horses of the principal deities.

The sacred sword.

Three *Shinto* priests on horseback.

Attendants on the Shrine.

Mounted priests.

Two musicians with *Tengu* (mountain genii) masks.

Sacred Palanquin, borne by fifty men.

The deity's rice-box; two bearers.

The deity's banquet table; six bearers.

Shinto priest on horseback.

Attendants on the Shrine.

Thirty leading citizens in ceremonial costume.

Thirty inferior *Shinto* priests in sacerdotal costume.

Two bearers of *gohei*.

Girl-child richly apparelled, riding in palanquin.

Two men with *hyoshi-gi*.

Sacred Palanquin, borne by 50 men.

The deity's rice-box, borne by 3 men.

The deity's table, borne by 8 men.

Attendants on the shrine.

Mounted priest.

Thirty inferior priests in sacerdotal costume.

Two bearers of *gohei*.

Girl-child, richly apparelled, in palanquin.

Three men with *hyoshi-gi*.

Sacred Palanquin, borne by 50 men.

The deity's rice-box, borne by 2 men.

The deity's table, borne by 6 men.

Mounted *Shinto* priest.

Ten Buddhist priests in armor, on horseback.

The Lord High Abbot, in canonicals, in a palanquin.

The deity's four-doored palanquin.

The deity's ox-carriage.

Glaivesmen and spearsmen.

The *dashi*, each drawn by from three to six black oxen with red and white trappings, and by an indefinite multitude of men, quaintly costumed and chanting as they pull; and each having on its platform from thirty to sixty professional musicians, dancers and actors, dressed in rich costumes, and posturing, dancing and singing, to accompaniment of flute and drum, whenever the *dashi* halts.

Such is the organization of the parish picnic. The "gently going cars" move with the utmost deliberation, pausing here and there while the drums beat, the flutes play and the dancers dance, so that the intervals of rest are filled with the sounds of music and with the applause of merry crowds; the intervals of motion with the swelling chant of the *dashi*-drawers. One hundred and sixty streets constitute the Sano parish. They contribute, for the purposes of the procession, forty-five bands, each of fifty youths, chosen by lot. Two days before the festival the citizens begin to prepare their houses. The view places on the roofs are fitted up; the lintels are draped; the mats are overspread with whatever of gay covering the family possesses; a background of glowing richness is made by ranging gold-foil screens in all rooms opening upon the street, and from the eaves as well as from poles along the route, red-and-white paper lanterns are suspended. It is a time of general feasting. The householder violates hospitality's fundamental principles if he fails to invite his friends from the less favored quarters of the city, and every father takes care that his unmarried daughters shall be dressed in the costliest and most picturesque garments within reach of his purse. From first to last there is no note of asceticism to disturb the glad harmony. For one day, indeed,—the day before the procession,—the parishioners are supposed to fast, but since their

fasting is limited to avoiding meat and vegetables of the onion family, which things are regarded as impure, the flesh is not perceptibly mortified.

Even more important and elaborate is the Kanda festival, which absorbs Tokyo's attention during a great part of the ninth month in the alternate years of the Sano celebration. Long before the *fête*, preparations are busily commenced—lanterns hung out; *nobori*¹ raised; casks of *saké* and boxes of macaroni piled up to feast the folks in the procession, and all the great *modistes* and *coiffeurs* of the capital engage in contriving for the daughters of their customers costumes and head-dresses that shall eclipse records and rivals alike. In nothing is Tokyo more recklessly extravagant than in the sums it lavishes for its daughters' adornment on these grand occasions. A tradesman does not exceed the sanction of custom when he spends a tenth part of his annual income on the dress of one little daughter. The Sano festival inspires similar but less costly effort, for the deities' outing lasts only one day, whereas in the Kanda parish the sacred palanquins and the *dashi* are three days *en route*. A special feature of the Kanda *matsuri* is a band of *danseuses* (*geisha*) who follow the *dashi* and, from time to time, give displays of their skill. They are called *tekamai*, the name of an ancient dance, consisting chiefly of graceful hand-waving. In the course of centuries, performers as well as performance have come to be designated by the same term. These dainty little lasses do not robe themselves for the purposes of the festival in the delicately hued garments and glowing girdles with which they know so well how to enhance the lamp-light effect of their charms. They dress in the small-sleeved tunic, tight-legged trousers and narrow cincture of the common workman (*shigoto-shi*), and it is their coy fancy to ape the sombre hue as well as the ungraceful shape of that low fellow's habiliments. But beyond the bounds of cut and color their feminine instinct rises in vehement rebellion. The tunic and the girdle become meadow-lands of embroidered bloom and verdure; things of costly loveliness to be cheered by the delighted crowd, applauded in private by the Don Juans of the district, and discussed despairingly by chagrined rivals. There is a hidden significance in the presence of the arch and innocent-looking *tekamai*. It is a lover that pays for her elaborate and most ephemeral costume; it is a lover that cuts off her raven tresses,—for even to queue and topknot the masculine mode is affected,—and it is a lover that defrays the charges of her idle life and the fees of her employers until her hair grows again to evening-party length. So, while she seems to proclaim her religious devotion, she in reality parades her professional successes.

In describing these festivals no lengthy mention has been made of the special deities worshipped. The omission is appropriate, for, as the reader has of course perceived, the religious element constitutes but an insignificant fraction of the *fête* in Japan. Sano and Kanda both revere Oana-muchi and Sukunahikona, immortal descendants of the sun goddess, and look for prosperity and happiness as the guerdon of these splendid *matsuri*.

¹The *nobori* is a species of flag, or standard. A strip of cotton cloth, varying in length from 3 or 4 feet to 30 or 40, and in width from a few inches to a yard, is fastened at both ends to bamboo rollers and attached lengthwise to a long bamboo pole capped with a gilt ball. On the cloth large ideographs designating the occasion are inscribed. The *nobori* looks like an extravagantly elongated sail bellying in the wind.

But another spirit is included among the objects of worship at the Kanda ceremonial—the spirit of Taira-no-Masakado. This is a name heinously conspicuous in Japanese history as the name of the only subject whose hand was ever raised in open rebellion against his sovereign. Masakado's brief career of madness belongs to the annals of the tenth century.

He fell doing battle with Taira-no-Sadamori on the plains of Shimosa, and his head was carried to Kanda for burial. Of such a hero is the effigy, enshrined with every mark of honor among the divine niches at the Kanda festival. We have seen, too, that one of the tutelary ghosts in the Sano parish is Kumasaka Chohan, a burglar of mediæval notoriety. It



ROKUHARA MITSUJI.

This Buddhist temple was founded in the tenth century.

may well be asked what kind of people they are who pay divine honors to the memory of arch traitors and villanous malefactors. The question has been thrust upon foreign attention of late years. Early on the morning of Feb. 11, 1889, the Minister of Education, Viscount Mori, one of modern Japan's most enlightened statesmen, was about to leave his residence for the purpose of proceeding to the palace, when a youth of twenty-five stabbed him fatally with a kitchen knife. The terrible success of the deed was enormously enhanced by the nature of the occasion, for the nation waited to receive on that day its first constitution, and the Minister of Education would have taken a prominent part in the grand pageant had not a murderer's hand arrested his steps. Nishino Buntaro, the assassin, fell under the swords of the minister's guards and was buried at Ten-no-ji behind the temple groves of Ueno. It appeared that his crime had been prompted by an act of irreverence which Viscount Mori was said to have committed at the Great Shrine of Ise a few months previously. The youth had conceived a fanatical idea that the duty of avenging the outraged deities devolved on him, and he discharged it with fanatical courage. Scarcely had he been consigned to the grave when the citizens of Tokyo began to pay visits to his tomb. Tradesmen, artisans, but, above all, actors, wrestlers, dancing girls, fencing masters and youthful politicians, flocked thither, so that every day a new forest of incense-sticks smoked and a fresh garden of flowers bloomed before the sepulchre. Foreign observers of the strange pageant

stood aghast. Was it conceivable, they inquired, that civilized people should worship at the tomb of a murderer and pay homage to the memory of an assassin? It seemed, on the one hand, as though the masses of Japan hid savage instincts beneath a surface of courtesy and refinement; on the other, as though a government that permitted such demoralizing displays must be very feeble, and a nation that fêted the murderer of a minister very disaffected. All such constructions and inferences were based on ignorance of Japanese character. The pilgrims to Nishino's tomb obeyed the same principle that assigns a niche in the Kanda shrine to the image of a great rebel and a place in the Sano procession to the effigy of a notorious robber. Daring and prowess, in whatever forms displayed, are dear to the Japanese. The act of Nishino Buntaro appealed strongly to their sense of the picturesque. An educated youth, who had hitherto led an unobtrusive, decorous and law-abiding life, without political friends, without resources other than those possessed by the humblest subject, made his way into the residence of a prominent Minister of State at a moment when the inmates were all on the alert, when the whole city was *en fête*, when the streets were crowded with soldiers and policemen, and, in obedience to an instinct of reverential patriotism, struck down the great man with the weapon of a common scullion, within sight of armed guards and at the very moment when the minister, dressed in full uniform, his breast glittering with orders, was about to take a leading place in the Imperial palace among a body of statesmen associated for a purpose that was destined to make them famous as long as their country had a history. It is scarcely possible to imagine a more striking contrast between instrument and achievement. What did this object lesson teach to the average Japanese? Not that assassination is admirable or bloodshed praiseworthy, but that weakness, insignificance and friendlessness constitute no effective barriers to signal success if they be retrieved by daring, resolution and self-reliance. It is to be endowed with a measure of the spirit of Nishino, Masakado and Kumasaka that the Japanese prays when he worships at the tomb of a murderer and makes offerings at the shrine of a rebel or a robber. One may "abhor the sin without hating the sinner," "loathe the priest yet love the stole." These subtle distinctions might not receive ready recognition from a Madison Square pugilist or an Alhambra ballet-girl, but tradition has taught them to the wrestler of Ekoin¹ and the *geisha* of Yanagi-bashi. If the government held up a finger, the pilgrimages to Nishino's grave would cease; if the Emperor made a gesture of dissent, the image of a rebellious subject would not be carried in triumphal procession past the palace gates. But the real significance of these demonstrations is not mistaken in Japan.

Greater than either the Sano festival or the Kanda festival is the *Gion-matsuri* in Kyoto, the greatest, indeed, of all such celebrations in Japan. Like the Tokyo *fêtes*, however, it consists essentially of a magnificent procession. The difference is in the nature of the objects of worship. Prominent among these is a glaive forged by the celebrated swordsmith

¹ The name of a place in Tokyo where wrestling matches are held annually to determine the national champions.

Sanjo Munechika. It is supposed to be endowed with the virtue that once belonged to a king's touch in Europe: raised reverentially to the head, it cures the ague. This blessed blade has the honor of riding, a hundred feet high, on a resplendent *dashi*, at the head of a line of twenty-three cars bearing effigies of celebrated scholars, of Chinese philosophers, of the moon, of a mantis and of a "flower thief." Mencius rides side by side with a lass who pilfers blossoms, but is not insulted by the companionship, for nature alone suffers by the theft. A conspicuous object in the Gion procession is the chief *danseuse*, a girl of twelve or thirteen who dances on a dais in the centre of the glaive *dashi*. Nothing beautiful or costly that Kyoto can contribute is neglected in decking out this damsel for the *fête*. On either side of her another virgin postures in unison, but the little lady in the middle is the goddess of the hour, the queen of the summer festival. Her reign does not end when the deities, the savants and the symbols have been re-consigned to their twelve months' seclusion in shrines and storehouses. It is then, indeed, that her triumph reaches its acme, for a procession is formed all on her own account. At the head march five *samurai*, in the old-time uniform of their rank; then comes a glaivesman; then two bearers of gorgeously lacquered boxes, containing the wardrobes of the little dame; then her palanquin, glowing with bright colors and sparkling ornaments, carried by four lads in correspondingly rich costume, and flanked by the chief local officials as well as by the two companion virgins, objects almost as brilliant as the queen herself. Over the palanquin is carried a monster umbrella with handle and ribs of rose-red lacquer, cherry blossoms and the ideograph for longevity blazoned on its surface, and a tasselled bag of brocade containing a Gion amulet suspended under its shelter. Two more wardrobe bearers follow, and porters of umbrellas in baskets and of gold-lacquered luncheon boxes bring up the rear. At the portals of the temple of Gion, a draught of holy wine (*miki*) and a "blessed amulet" (*shimpu*) are given to the virgin, whereupon she ceases to be a mere "young thing" (*chigo*) and becomes a "sacred child" (*suiko*). The tediousness of these details will serve, perhaps, to convey to the reader some faint idea of



HOZU RAPIDS ABOVE KYOTO.

A delightful trip from this point to Arashiyama may be taken in a small boat, passing through a continuous series of rapids, between lofty mountains, for a distance of 13 miles.

the elaborate code of conventionalities that has to be consulted at each point of such ceremonies. Everything is provided for by tradition; and every proviso must be observed.

If these huge metropolitan festivals show the general attitude of the national mind toward supernatural subjects, the smaller celebrations afford a still more accurate insight into the superstitions and daily ambitions of the people. Some time in the middle ages, a great eagle made its appearance at Ajiki in the province of Shimosa, which lies on the eastern shores of Edo (Tokyo) Bay. The eagle, of course, typifies everything that is majestically aggressive and tenaciously acquisitive. It thus becomes to the Japanese a symbol of good fortune. The Shimosa people built a shrine in honor of their visitor and covered the walls with votive tablets, depicting an eagle bestrid by a man in official robes—"a commoner rising to rank and office by the aid of wings that soar and talons that capture." By and by the capital of the Tokugawa grew so big that it drew to itself whatever was notable in the neighboring provinces. The eagle's shrine found its way to the suburbs of the metropolis, in the Shitaya district, within sight of the Paphian quarter, and became a place of pilgrimage for every one craving the gifts of fortune—for the wrestler, the courtesan, the actor, the dancing girl, the jester, the *raconteur*, the musician, the tradesman and the apprentice. Nothing that can be called a ceremony is associated with the eagle's *fête*, the *Tori-no Machi* (abbreviation of *matsuri*), or worship of the bird, as the people call it. Only on the "bird days" in November, perhaps two days, perhaps three if the calendar is kind, tens of thousands of people flock out to this shrine among the rice fields, and, after a brief act of worship, purchase harbingers of luck in the shape of big rakes, parent potatoes, millet dumplings and bamboo tea whisks. Stalls for the sale of these homely articles occupy all available spaces within the temple enclosure and along the avenues leading to the gate, and as the etiquette of the eagle requires that there shall be no bargaining—when did the great bird stop to discuss the preliminaries of a capture?—the hucksters drive a roaring trade, especially at the close of the day when their wares are nearly sold out and belated worshippers see a risk of returning empty-handed. The rake, as part of the paraphernalia of a pursuer of gain, explains itself. But there is a strange feature about these eagle rakes. Their teeth are said to be made from the wood of coffins. At cremations, if economy has to be practised, the corpse is removed from its casket and exposed to the direct action of the flames. The casket then becomes the property of the crematory and is purchased by the rake-makers. There is no explanation of such a singular custom, nor any evidence that it is observed on principle. The parent potato typifies humble ambition. Buried underground and growing in oblivion, it is at all events the head of a family. "Better be the comb of a cock than the tail of an ox." Millet dumplings are associated with the orthodox group of lucky articles by a play upon words. To "clutch millet with wet hands" is a popular metaphor for greed. *Mochi*, which signifies a dumpling, signifies also "to hold." Thus "millet dumpling" becomes a metaphor for grasping largely and holding firmly. The strength of the people's faith in these pilgrimages,

THE ONE HUNDRED STEPS AT YOKOHAMA.

At the head of these steps stands a small tea-house occupied by Commodore Perry in 1853-4, when the American expedition forced Japan to open her ports to the outside world. The view from the tea-house built on the edge of the Bluff commands the business section of Yokohama and the harbor. The Bluff is the residential section of the foreign settlement.







prayers and purchases is evidenced by the crowd that the city pours out to the *Tori-no Machi* every fall, and by the eager happiness of the worshippers' mien. But if any members of the upper classes go it is only to look and to laugh.

In the festivals of which we have thus far spoken there is nothing that suggests any affinity between the religious rites of Japan and those of ancient Europe. But we now reach a point of marked similarity. Just as the fire of Hestia was kept perpetually burning in the Grecian prytaneum two thousand years ago, so at the national shrines in Izumo and Ise there are stone lanterns in which the flame is said to have glowed uninterruptedly since the age of



ENTRANCE TO NAGASAKI HARBOR.

A narrow inlet from the sea, three miles in length, indented with numerous bays surrounded by wooded hills.

the gods. If that be so, it is a flame twenty-five centuries old. The origin of the fire-guarding cult is now so well understood, and its practice has been traced to so many races, that to find it in Japan also is neither surprising nor specially significant. But, as might have been anticipated, some of the rites connected with it reflect the peculiar genius of the Japanese. In Kyoto on the last evening of the year, when the street leading to the temple of Gion is converted into a market for the sale of New Year's decorations, and is crowded with people of all degrees, men go about carrying short hempen ropes with one end burning. These they swing around their heads, and it is the privilege of any person struck by a rope to revile the bearer without stint. The Japanese language is not furnished with curses after the pattern of Occidental blasphemies, but it lends itself to the construction of very pregnant invective, and no one that has waited in Gion-machi to see the death of the old year, can labor under any doubt of the Kyoto people's capacity for objurgation. But it is all perfectly good-humored; a mutual measuring of abusive vocabularies. Meanwhile, a big bonfire burns within the precincts of the shrine. It has been kindled from a year-old flame tended in a lamp hanging under the eaves of the sacred building, and people come there to light a taper which, burning before the household altar, shall be the beacon of domestic prosperity. As the night wears on, the crowds gradually flow into the temple grounds, and there, at the "hour of the tiger" (2 A. M.) the "Festival of the Pine Shavings" takes place. A *Shinto* priest reads

a ritual. His colleagues obtain a spark by the friction of two pieces of wood, and set fire to a quantity of shavings packed into a large iron lamp. These charred fragments of pine wood the worshippers receive, and carry away as amulets to protect their possessors against plague and pestilence.

In provincial districts the religious festival sometimes presents very quaint features. On the first "day of the horse" in the month of April, there is performed, at the *Tsukuma Matsuri* in Omi province, a manner of worship intended to promote wifely fidelity. Wives and widows are marshalled in procession, each carrying upon her head as many earthenware pots as she has had husbands. A woman's glory in Japan is to marry once, and if her husband dies, to remain always faithful to his memory. It must be confessed that among the lower orders the ideal is seldom attained. Marriage, not being preceded in their case by courtship or by any opportunity of ascertaining mutual compatibility of disposition, is often followed by separation. Upon the woman rests the responsibility for such accidents, since the theory of conjugal life is that the wife must adapt herself to the husband, not the husband to the wife. Thus to have been divorced frequently, while it does not by any means imply marital infidelity, is held to indicate some want of self-abnegation or moral pliability on the woman's part. It might be supposed that the Omi dames would shirk the obligation of parading their conjugal records in public. But a belief that the goddess whom they worship will punish insincerity, prompts them to carry their proper tale of pots without scanting the number. There is, indeed, a tradition that a certain crafty woman once had recourse to the device of hiding in a big pot that represented her last husband, several little pots that represented his predecessors. But judgment overtook her. She stumbled as she walked in the procession, and the big pot falling from her head, displayed its contents to public gaze, and to her lasting shame.

An even stranger celebration takes place on the first "day of the hare" in the tenth month, at Wasa, in the province of Kishu. It is called the "laughing festival of Wasa" (*Wasa no Warai-matsuri*). There is a belief that in the tenth month of every year all the deities repair to the great shrine of Izumo, and there hold a conclave for the purpose of arranging the nuptial affairs of the nation. The month is called the "godless moon" (*Kami-na-zuki*) for all parts of the country except Izumo, whereas, on the contrary, it is distinguished as the "moon of the gods' presence" (*Kami-ari-zuki*) by the inhabitants of Izumo. The legend has lost much of its old force, but it still commands the venerable faith of conservative rustics, and many a farmer in Izumo carefully locks the door of his dwelling at sunset and refrains from venturing abroad before dawn during the period of the deities' assembly at Ise. It happened that when this divine parliament was first convened, one ill-starred deity, Miwa Daimyo-jin, mistook the date or otherwise mismanaged affairs so that the debate had terminated before he reached Ise. The laughing festival is intended to commemorate that accident. Instead of sympathizing with the belated god, the people assemble to laugh at him, as the

other deities are supposed to have laughed when he presented himself to take part in a finished discussion. The fashion of the festival is as quaint as its conception. All the oldest men in the district and all the children come together and form a procession for marching to the shrine. The elders head the array, carrying two boxes of fixed capacity, filled with persimmons and oranges spitted on bamboo rods. The children follow, grouped round a *go-hei* and holding in their hands oranges and persimmons similarly spitted. These preliminaries as well as the progress to the shrine are conducted with the utmost solemnity. Arrived at the shrine, the grayest among the elders turns about to face the little ones and orders them to laugh. There is never any failure to obey, and from the children the contagion spreads to the adult population until the whole district ripples with merriment from morning till evening. It is a graceful notion that the deities desire the people to share their mirth as well as to pray for their tutelage.

Several provincial festivals have gradually assumed the character of athletic competitions. At the top of a mountain called Kimpo-zan, in Ugo province, stands the shrine of *Ha-usshi-wake*. On the 5th day of the 1st month, all the robust men of the district, to the number of several thousands, ascend the mountain and pass the night in a snow-cave some two furlongs from the summit. At that season the snow lies ten feet deep on Kimpo-zan. To reach the cave is in itself an arduous undertaking. When the first streak of dawn is seen in the sky, the youngest and strongest of the band of worshippers start from the cave. Stripped to their loin-cloths, they race in frenzied emulation over the snow and up the steep cliffs, the first to reach the shrine being assured of the deity's protection throughout the year and of his comrades' profound admiration. This race does not end the *fête*. All the competi-



CUTTING LEAF TOBACCO.

The diminutive pipes used by the natives are filled with tobacco cut very fine.

tors crowd into the precincts of the shrine and engage in a bout of general wrestling. They do not attempt to hurl each other to the ground after the manner of Western wrestlers, but only to thrust one another from the enclosure. By degrees the remaining occupants of the cave join the *mêlée*, the rule observed by each newcomer being to aid the weak and beat

back the strong. It may be imagined that from a mad contest in which four or five thousand strong men engage, struggling desperately in the snow and among the rocks on the summit of a lofty mountain in midwinter, many must emerge with serious injuries. But tradition affirms that no one has ever been known to receive a disabling hurt. The deity, they say, protects his devotees. The truth is that in competitions of such a nature the Japanese maintain from first to last the most imperturbable good humor. Any one losing his temper would be ridiculed for months. After the wrestling is over and when each man has given stalwart proof of the earnestness of his faith, they all join in one band and march down the mountain singing.

At Ono-machi in Bingo the people worship Susa-no-o, the rough deity, whose unruly conduct terrified his sister, the sun goddess, so much that she retired into a cave. The festival in honor of the god takes place in the sixth month and is of such a nature as "the impetuous male deity" himself might be supposed to organize if he gave any thought to the question. There is no stately procession, no display of gorgeous *dashi*, no dancing of brilliantly robed damsels. The whole affair consists of a tumultuous trial of speed and strength. Bands of strong men seize the sacred cars, race with them to the sea, and, having plunged in breast deep, their burden held aloft, dash back at full speed to the shrine. There refreshments, wine, fish, and a box of rice, are served out, and then again the race is resumed, the goal being the central flag (*nobori*) among a number set up in a large plain. To this contest the bearers of the cars devote themselves with as much zeal as though they were fighting for their lives. Hundreds run beside each car ready to replace any bearer that is thrown down or exhausted; their feet beat time to a wildly shouted chorus, and as they sweep along, apparently unconscious of everything but their goal, and wholly reckless of obstacles or collisions, it seems incredible that fatal accidents should not occur again and again. Yet, no sooner is the struggle ended, than these men who, a moment before, appeared ready to trample upon each other's corpses, may be seen seated in tea houses, chatting, laughing, circulating the wine-cup and behaving as if such an incident as a desperate struggle for the favor of the deity had never interrupted the even tenor of their placid existences.

At other *fêtes* the worshippers seek to gain possession of some sacred object supposed to insure exceptional good fortune to the holder. Five hundred years ago, a merchant's apprentice walking by the seaside near Hakozaki in Chikuzen, found two perfectly spherical balls of wood which had been cast upon the shore by the waves. The shrine of the "god of war" (*Hachiman*) at Hakozaki is celebrated in Japanese history. Supplications offered there at the time when the great Mongol armada swept down upon Japan in the thirteenth century, are supposed to have produced the storm that shattered the enemy's fleet and strewed the coast of Kiushu with his dead. It is a place of miracles. A crystal ball is one of the three sacred insignia of Japan. It also symbolizes the pearl of great price held in the claws of the sea god's dragon. Hence, two perfect spheres of finely grained wood cast upon the beach at Hakozaki necessarily suggested supernatural agency. Their finder carried them to the

Hakozaki shrine and reverentially intrusted them to the custody of the priests, having first washed them carefully in holy water taken from the granite cistern at the adjacent fane of Ebisu. From that time the young apprentice seemed to become the favorite of fortune. Ebisu, the jovial-faced fisher deity, who provides for men's daily sustenance, had evidently taken the youth under his protection. Whenever the third day of the first month came round—the anniversary of the finding of the balls—the apprentice, soon a thriving merchant, did not fail to repair to the temple. Taking the sacred spheres thence, he would carry them to the shrine of Ebisu, wash them in the holy water, anoint them with clove-oil and bear them back



UENO PARK, TOKYO.

The largest and finest public park in Japan: noted for its wonderful cherry blossoms.

to their place in the temple. When and how this custom was elevated to the rank of a religious rite, there is no record, but within less than a century and a half from the finding of the balls, a "jewel-grasping festival" came to be celebrated at Hakozaki on the third day of every first month. It took the form of a gigantic scramble. The priests, having carried the ball—now, by some unexplained process, transformed into a single sphere of hard stone—to the shrine of Ebisu, and having washed it and read a ritual, delivered it to the crowd of worshippers for conveyance to the temple of Hachiman. Whatever hands held it at the moment of final transfer to the temple, were the hands of a person destined to high fortune. Not the province of Chikuzen alone, but all the northern districts of Kiushu and the regions on the opposite coast of the Inland Sea, sent their strong men to take part in the struggle. The distance between the fane of Ebisu and the temple of Hachiman is only a few yards, yet hours were spent in the passage of the "jewel" from one place to the other. Naked, except for a loin-cloth, thousands of men struggled in the narrow enclosure until sheer exhaustion gradually thinned their ranks and left space for the most enduring to win a path, inch by inch, to the temple.

Almost the same description applies to a much more celebrated *fête* held within the precincts of the temple of Kwannon, the goddess of mercy, at Saidai-ji in Bizen province, on the fourteenth day of the first month. There the scramble is for pieces of wood thrown by

the priests to a multitude of devotees. No supernatural tradition attaches to these amulets. They have their origin in a simple exercise of benevolence. In the middle era of the temple's existence (the beginning of the sixteenth century), the priests made a practice of presenting gifts to such of their parishioners as had shown special zeal during the New Year's devotional exercises, which lasted from the first to the fourteenth of the first month. By degrees the number of worshippers eligible for such distinction grew so large that some method of special selection became necessary, and recourse was had to lots. The exciting element of chance thus introduced helped, of course, to swell the concourse of devotees, and finally a clever abbot, probably borrowing the idea from the "jewel-grasping festival" of Hakozaki, devised the plan of leaving the people to settle their own eligibility by an athletic contest. The little town lying at the temple's feet contains only two thousand inhabitants in ordinary times, but at the festival season the population grows to fifty or sixty thousand, and a moralist might find food for reflection in the fact that the services of steamships and railways are borrowed to convey this stream of worshippers and sightseers to an observance so suggestive of the rudest ages. At ten o'clock on the night of the fourteenth of the first month (8th of February according to the present calendar), the Saidai-ji drum beats the signal, and the first band of intending competitors run at full speed through the temple ground, plunge into the river below, and having thus purified themselves, return to the sacred enclosure by a different route. A second time the drum sounds at midnight, and fresh crowds of combatants pour through the temple grounds. In truth, from the first tap of the drum until its final note is heard at two o'clock in the morning, streams of stalwart men never cease to surge between the temple and the river, their feet beating time to a chorus of *esa, esa*, the echoes of which can be heard on the opposite coast, twenty-five miles distant, "like the roar of surf breaking on rocks." Exactly at two o'clock the "divine wood" (*shingi*), a little cylinder of fresh pine, specially marked, is thrown from the temple window to the surging crowd, and a fierce struggle commences for its possession. One prize for some ten thousand competitors would be too meagre an arrangement. The *shingi* is therefore accompanied by hundreds of similar but smaller tokens (*kushigo*), which insure fertility to farm lands where they are set up, and health to the farmer's family. But the *shingi* itself is the great prize. The competition for its possession is not confined to the actual combatants. Wealthy households also vie with one another to obtain it, each setting out in the vestibule a box of fresh sand whither the divine wood must be carried before the contest is considered at an end. Thus the struggle extends to the streets of the town itself, and long after the *shingi's* fate has been decided, the army of naked men wrestle and shout within the temple enclosure, the breath of the wild struggle hanging over them like a cloud in the frosty moonlight.

It is easy to see that the upper classes take no active part in celebrations such as those described above. The religious festival in Japan owes its vitality to superstitions prevalent among the middle and lower orders only.

A KOTO PLAYER.

The koto is the most important of Japanese musical instruments, and proficiency in playing upon it is highly esteemed. The tones evoked have but little resonance, and the compositions are so peculiar as to be unintelligible to foreigners.

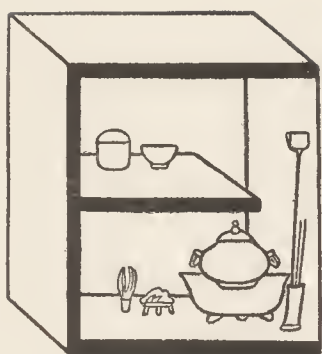






XII.

OBSERVANCES AND PASTIMES.



VERY family has rules and methods of its own which it follows with regularity directly proportionate to its age. The members of a household newly franked with the stamp of gentility, look abroad for models of fashion and deportment, but the members of a household that has enjoyed pride of place through immemorial generations, enact their own canons, and obey them with scrupulosity that grows with obedience. For two thousand years, more or less, the Japanese nation lived the life of an independent and virtually secluded family, borrowing largely, indeed, from the conventions and precedents of its over-sea neighbors, but impressing upon everything foreign the mark of home genius, so that, though the metal remained alien, the coins struck from it bore domestic images and superscriptions. Little by little, the doings of the day, the etiquette of the season, the observances of the month and the celebrations of the year were coded by custom and promulgated by practice, until the people finally found themselves subjects of a system of conventionalities, pleasant, graceful and refined, but inflexible. Nowhere else can we see grooves of routine beaten so deeply by the tread of centuries; nowhere else does the light of old times, the *veteris vestigia flammæ*, shine so steadily on the paths of usage. These customs may be examined one by one, and taken thus independently they present generally very pretty and often very quaint studies. But to appreciate their relation to the life of the nation, we must briefly follow the nation in its observance of them from New Year's day to New Year's eve.

According to the calendar of old Japan, the commencement of the year varied from what Western folks call the 16th of January to the 19th of February, but, on the average, it may be said to have fallen a full month later than the day fixed by the Gregorian method of reckoning. It was thus associated with an idea of spring foreign to the corresponding season in Europe and America. In fact, the first fortnight of the first month was called "spring advent" (*ris-shun*), the second fortnight, the "rains" (*u-sui*). That old idea still clings to the time even under the altered conditions of the new calendar, and people still persuade themselves that spring has dawned when the first January sun rises, though neither the plum nor the snowparting plant (*yuki-wari-so*)—each a harbinger of spring in Japan—is within a month of opening its buds. To see the New Year in, is considered a wholesome custom, but it involves something more than it does in the West, for, after greeting the stranger, folks

remain up to welcome him. Let a man's enthusiasm be ever so defective, he is expected to rise at the hour of the tiger (4 A. M.), wash his feet and hands and don new clothes to meet the auspicious morn. Then, with his gala garments in due order, he worships the celestial and terrestrial deities, performs obeisance to the spirits of his ancestors, offers congratu-



NARAYA HOTEL, MIYANOSHITA.

A favorite mountain hostelry kept in Japanese style.

lations to parents and elders, and finally sits down to breakfast. No ordinary viands are consumed. The tea must be made with "young water" (*waka-mizu*), drawn from the well as the first ray of the New Year's sun strikes it. The *pièce de résistance* (*zôni*) is a species of *pot pourri*, made from six components,¹ invariably present though in varying proportions,

and it is absolutely essential that every one desiring to be hale and hearty throughout the opening twelve months should quaff a measure of special *saké* from a red-lacquer cup.² Each householder, from the highest to the humblest, is careful to prepare and set out an "elysian stand," or red-lacquer tray, covered with leaves of the evergreen *yuzuriha*, and supporting a rice dumpling, a lobster, oranges, persimmons, chestnuts, dried sardines and herring roe. This stand and its contents have allegorical signification. Ancient Chinese legends speak of three islands in some remote ocean where youth is everlasting, where birds and animals are all pure white, and where the mountains and palaces are built of gold and silver. The "elysian stand" (*hôrai-dai*) represents the principal of these three islands (*Hôrai-jima*), and the viands piled upon it are either homonymous with words expressing perpetuity and longevity, or present some feature suggesting long life and prosperity. Thus the leaves spread upon the stand are from the shrub *yuzuriha*, and on them repose bitter oranges called *daidai*.

¹ Rice cake (*mochi*), Japanese turnip (*daikon*), potatoes (*imo*), a species of seaweed (*kombu*), haliotis (*awabi*), a burdock (*gobo*).

² This *saké* is called *toso*, though the term is properly limited to the spices themselves. The custom came from China, where it existed certainly as far back as the third century before Christ. It is said to have originated with an old hermit who distributed among the villagers packets of physic, directing that the packet be let down by a string into the well, taken up again on New Year's day and placed in a tub of *saké*, a draught of which would prove a preservative against every kind of disease. The practice was introduced into Japan at the beginning of the ninth century, and etiquette soon elaborated the ceremonial by prescribing a special kind of *saké* for each of the first three days of the year — *toso*, *biyakusan* and *toshosan*. It is *de rigueur* that the youngest of a party should be the first to drink the spiced *saké*. As for the spices, they are chiefly carminatives.

But in ordinary colloquial, *daidai yuzuri* signifies to "bequeath from generation to generation." The kernels of chestnuts, dried and crushed, are called *kachi-guri*, and *kachi* also signifies "victory." The lobster (*ebi*) with its curved back and long tentacles is typical of life so prolonged that the back becomes bent and the beard grows to the waist. The seaweed, *kombu*, suggests *yorakobu*, or *yorokombu*, to "rejoice." Sardines are set out because the little fish swim never singly but always in pairs, suggesting conjugal fidelity; herring roe, because of all the sea's inhabitants the herring is supposed to be the most prolific; dried persimmons, because of the fruit's medicinal qualities; and rice cake, otherwise called "mirror dumpling" (*kagami-mochi*), because, in the first place, its shape and name refer to the "sacred mirror" of the *Shinto* paraphernalia, and, in the second, when cut up for consumption it is known as *ha-gatame*, or "teeth strengthener," a word having the same sound as "debility restorer." Thus this assemblage of edibles constitutes a feast of fortune. Originally the elysian stand was set before guests coming to pay New Year's calls, who partook of the comestibles placed upon it. But subsequently it became a mere article of furniture, a part of the decorations of the season. These decorations, spoken of collectively as *kado-matsu*, or "pine of the doorway," consist primarily of pine and bamboo saplings planted at either side of the vestibule and having a rope of rice straw (*shime-nawa*) suspended across or festooned from the boughs. History says that the fashion of the pines dates from the beginning of the tenth century; that the bamboo was added five hundred years later, and that the straw rope preceded both by an unknown interval. No religious significance attaches to the pine or the bamboo; they simply typify ever-green longevity. But the rope recalls the central event in the Japanese cosmogony, when the sun goddess having been enticed from her



CLERKS IN JAPANESE MERCHANT'S OFFICE.

All mathematical calculations used to be made upon the Chinese abacus as shown in the photograph.

cavern, a barrier was stretched across the entrance to prevent her from retreating thither again. Wherever the rope hangs, the sweet fresh breath of spring is supposed to penetrate. This, then, is the most prominent element of the decorations: it is suspended not only at the entrance of the house, but also beside the well, before the bathroom, across the sacred shelf

and in the inner court. At the central point of the rope a lobster with some fern fronds and *yuzuriha* leaves is usually tied, the fronds and leaves serving, in this instance, to suggest hardy verdure. A piece of charcoal is added to the assembly, tradition assigning to it the power of warding off evil influences.

Theoretically no work of any kind should be done on New Year's day. Even the usual business of sweeping the house is forbidden, lest some element of the "male principle" should be inadvertently removed with the rubbish. But this idleness is merely nominal, for there devolves upon every one the inevitable duty of paying congratulatory visits to friends and relatives; a duty which is gradually losing many of its old-time graces, and assuming the character of a *corvée*. From the tiniest child to the most ancient grandfather each dons the best and newest garments that the family wardrobe can furnish, and while the grown-up folk make their round of calls, lads, lasses and children devote themselves to appropriate pastimes. The visits paid by the small fry of society to the great fish, involve nothing more than the inscription of one's name in a book or the deposit of one's card in a basket. It is impossible to conceive anything colder and more conventional. Often even the formality of a servant to receive the names of the callers is dispensed with: the visitor finds an untenanted vestibule, a receptacle for cards and a name-book. But where friendship is concerned, and among the middle and lower classes generally, the call assumes a more genuine and genial character. The visitor carries with him, or is preceded by, a present of some kind, a "year jewel" (*toshidama*), usually trifling in value — as a basket of oranges, a fan, a bundle of dried seaweed (*hoshi-nori*), a towel, a parcel of paper, a salted salmon or a box of sweetmeats — but always wrapped up with scrupulous neatness, and encircled by a cord with strands of red and gold, or red and white, the ends joined in a "butterfly knot," under which is thrust a bit of haliotis looking out from a quiver-shaped envelope. Black is the ill-omened hue among colors in Japan; red stands at the opposite end of the category, and red and gold constitute the richest combination, red and white being next in order of auspiciousness. The bit of dried haliotis has a double meaning: it suggests not only singleness of affection, supposed to be typified by the mollusk's single shell, but also durability of love and longevity, since the dried haliotis is capable of being stretched to an extraordinary length. This elaboration of detail extends to the formulæ of greeting. The curt phrases current in the Occident are replaced by sentences that centuries of use have polished and crystallized: "I respectfully tender rejoicings at the opening season;" "I thank you for the many acts of kindness shown to me in the old year, and trust that there will be no change in the new;" "On the contrary, it is I who have to be grateful for your services, and to beg for their continuance;" "I am ashamed to offer such an exceedingly insignificant object, but I entreat that you will do me the honor of accepting it as a mere token;" "I am overwhelmed to find that you have come to me when I should have hastened to wait upon you;" and so forth and so on, each sentence punctuated with profound bows and polite inspirations. Meanwhile, the streets are converted into

playgrounds. Business is entirely limited to the sale or purchase of "treasure-ships" (*takara-bune*), a favorite toy typical of good fortune, sweet *saké* and bean jelly (*yokan*), carried about by hucksters whose musical cries enhance the general festivity. The shops are not shut, but ingress is denied by means of bamboo blinds hanging underneath tablets which bear the name of the householder, and are fastened in place with cords of red and white. There is a sound of laughter everywhere, for all the young people turn out in bright costumes, and play battle-board (*hago-ita*) and shuttlecock, the penalty for dropping the shuttlecock being to receive, on a tender part of the body, a whack from the battle-boards of all the other players, or a smudge of ink on the face, each of which visitations evokes peals of mirth. The shuttlecock is a diminutive affair, flying swiftly and requiring to be struck true and full. Tradition ascribes to it originally the shape of a dragon-fly, and alleges that the game acts as a charm against the attacks of mosquitoes during the ensuing summer, the dragon-fly being a devourer of those insect pests. But that is a mere fantasy. The game of shuttlecock came to Japan from China. In the latter country it is a pastime for men; the heels of their shoes, soled with paper to a thickness of one or two inches, serve for battleboards, and they kick



A JAPANESE LADY.

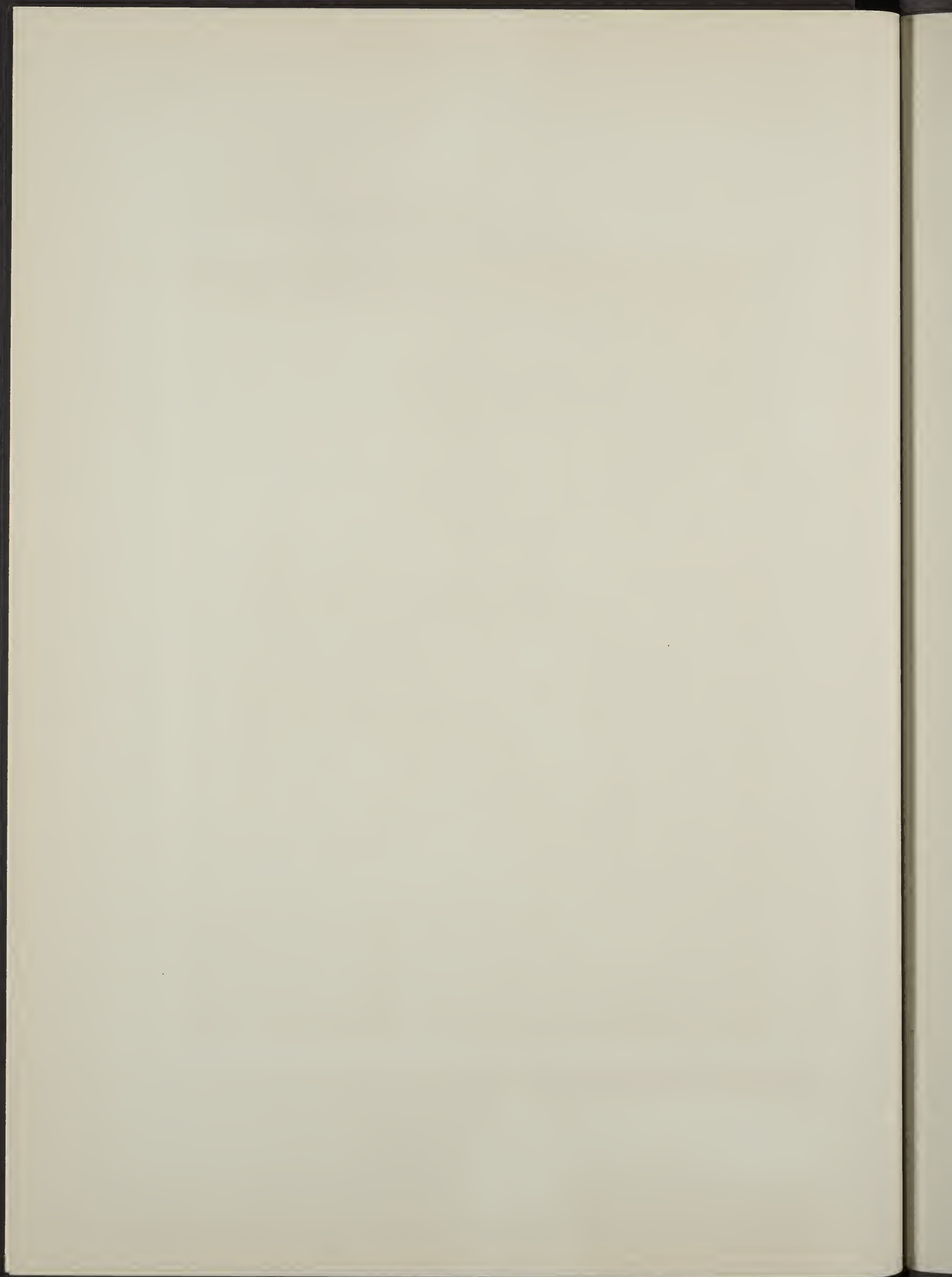
with marvellous dexterity. Japan added a battle-board, and thus adapted the amusement to both sexes, while, at the same time, bringing its paraphernalia within the range of decorative art. For the battle-board gradually became an object of beauty. The idea of furnishing it with a cat-gut face or parchment back did not occur to its makers; it remained essentially a thin flat board of white pine. But its reverse, lacquered at first in gold and colors, was finally covered with applied pictures (*oshie*), showing all the elaboration of detail that distinguishes a Parisian *poupée* of the most costly kind. The Japanese maiden loves and cherishes dolls at least as much as does her little sister of the West, but her battle-boards hold nearly the same rank in her affections, and if she is fortunate in the possession of rich parents and fond friends, the pillars of her playroom support galleries of battle-boards where you may see all the great personages of her country's history moulded in white *habutae* (a kind of silk), and

tricked out in the resplendent robes of the palace or the glittering armor of the campaign. Battle-board and shuttlecock, though it engages the attention of girls of all ages, finds comparatively little favor with lads until they have reached the age when love of muscular sports begins to be supplemented by a sense of feminine graces. Kite-flying is the amusement of the boy proper. It is a curious fact, apparently inconsistent with experience in other directions, that while the kite occupies at least as large a space in the vista of Japanese as of Chinese childhood, and attracts a much greater share of adult attention in Japan than in China, the ingenious and fantastic shapes that the toy takes in the Middle Kingdom are not emulated in the Island Empire. The dragon, two or three fathoms long, that may be seen writhing over a Chinese village, each section of its body an independent aeroplane, becomes in Japan a single rectangular surface, generally lacking even the picturesque adjunct of a tail, and unornamented save that the figure of some renowned warrior is rudely caricatured on its face. This difference indicates simply that the Japanese boy prefers the practical to the fanciful. What he wants is, not a quaint monster undulating at a low elevation, but an object that shall soar as loftily and as perpendicularly as possible, and shall hang humming from the blue right overhead.

We digress at this point from the routine of our references in order to speak more fully of kites; for while they hold among Japanese pastimes a rank so prominent as to call for special description, the season for flying them varies in different localities, and it is consequently impossible to assign to them a set place in any calendar of sports. Little lads in every town and village make New Year's day the great epoch for this business, but adult kite-flyers choose other times. In Nagasaki, for example, which enjoys a lofty reputation for skill in such matters, the third month of the old almanac, that is to say, the balmy time of April or early May, is the season for the *shi-yen-kai* (paper-flying assembly), and on three days in that month—the 10th, the 15th and the 20th—all the world and his wife or light-o'-love flock out to one of three spots traditionally appropriated for the game. The kites vary in size from one to thirty-six square feet, but are uniformly rectangular in shape, their ribs made of seasoned bamboo slightly convex to the wind, their paper coverings joined and spread so deftly that perfect equipoise is obtained, and their connection with the flying cord effected by a skein of filaments converging from innumerable points of their surface. The string, through a length of ten to a hundred yards, is covered with powdered glass, for the object of each kite company is to cut down all competitors. Its cord once severed, a kite becomes the property of any one save its original owner, and that inviolable law leads to the organization of bands of kite-catchers, who mount into high trees, stand at points of vantage, or roam about, armed with long poles, lassos and other catching contrivances. It is understood that whenever several catchers lay hands simultaneously on a kite cut adrift, the person nearest to the severed end of the string shall be regarded as the possessor, and that, where distinction is difficult, the kite must be torn into fragments then and there. But despite

AN ITINERANT MERCHANT.

The Yankee pedler, who travels along the country roads with his horse and cart laden with a miscellaneous assortment of wares for home use, has his prototype in Japan. The latter, however, cannot afford to keep a horse, and so draws the load himself on a two-wheeled hand-cart.







these precautions against dispute, fierce fights sometimes occur, and Nagasaki was once divided into two factions that threatened for a moment to destroy the town and each other in the sequel of a kite-flying picnic. Generally, however, the merriest good-humor prevails, and the vanquished return as serene as the victors, all equally undisturbed by the thought that the cost of the *shi-yen-kai* makes a large inroad into the yearly economies of the richest as well as the poorest. Tosa, the southern province of the island of Shikoku, is scarcely less celebrated than Nagasaki for the kite-flying propensities of its inhabitants. But there is no set season in Tosa. The birth of a boy, whether it occur in spring, summer or winter, is counted the appropriate time for a sport that typifies the soaring of ambition and the flight of genius. Humble households send up little kites to signalize these domestic events, but great families have recourse to the *furoshiki-dako*, a monster from twenty-four to thirty feet square, with a tail from a thousand to twelve hundred yards long. The tail, made of red and blue paper, or red and white, in alternate rolls, is coiled in a great open chest, from which the ascending kite draws it, and it is at this huge appendage that rival kites aim their flight. As the kite is pulled down from the clouds, the spectators struggle to possess themselves of the tail, which is generally torn into fragments in the scramble. A feast for all who have assisted to fly the kite terminates the ceremony. Vast, however, as are the dimensions of the *furoshiki-dako* of Tosa, the pride of place, so far as size is concerned, belongs to the "two-thousand-sheet kites" of Suruga and Tottomi provinces. A "sheet" refers to the form in which paper is ordinarily manufactured, namely, a rectangle measuring a foot by seven inches, approximately. Thus the superficies of a two-thousand-sheet kite, allowing for the joinings of the sheets, is from a thousand to eleven hundred square feet, or about the



MYAMAIRI CEREMONY.

Twenty-one days after the birth of a child this ceremony is performed, the *papier-mache* dogs being presented by friends.

size of a carpet that would cover a room thirty-three feet square. Such a kite requires a sum of from 500 to 600 *yen* to construct it, a cable to fly it, a score of strong men to control it, and a special building to store it, the great hall in a temple being often utilized for this purpose. At the opposite extreme of the scale of kite-flying districts stand the provinces of Owari and

Mikawa. There the smaller the kite, the more highly it is esteemed. Tiny representations of dragon-flies, cicadas and bees are flown with gossamer silk wound on spindles of ivory or tortoise-shell.

It might be supposed that a visit to the temples to pray for good fortune during the



STREET LEADING TO RAILWAY STATION, YOKOHAMA.

Within the Japanese section of the city.

new year would be considered an essential part of the day's duties by the pious section of the population; but although a few aged or particularly superstitious folk may be seen offering up a brief orison to the tutelary deity, they are the exception, not the rule. It is considered more fitting to assemble on some highland and join hands of reverence as the first sun of the

year rises above the horizon. Another feature of New Year's day is a dance performed in the streets by strolling mummers who go about in pairs, *manzai* and *saizo*, fantastically apparelled. One carries a small hand drum, the other a fan, and they dance from door to door with a degree of vigor not usually displayed by saltatory artists in Japan. Girls of the Eta¹ class also go about wearing immense hats that almost completely hide their faces, and playing *samisen*. These are the *tori-oi*, or bird-chasers. A Chinese superstition, transplanted to Japan, says that birds of ill omen hover in the air on New Year's day, and seek an opportunity to enter men's abodes. It is the duty of the *Eta* damsels to avert this calamity, and little paper parcels of *cash* handed out to them from house after house as they pass along, striking a few notes on the *samisen* here and a few notes there, show how conservatively respectful is the demeanor of even the modern Japanese towards these ancient beliefs.

As the first day of the month is one of complete abstention from all ordinary business, so the second marks the conventional resumption of trades, industries and occupations. The student looks into his books; the calligraphist uses his brush; the merchant opens his store; the mechanic takes out his tools; the sailor handles his ship; the painter mixes a color; and the wholesale dealer sends goods to the retailer. But all these doings are only pretty make-

¹ A class of Japanese ranking even lower than the commoners.

believes. No one thinks of working seriously. Even the *hatsuni*, the first distribution of merchandise, takes the form of a picturesque procession of hand-wagons gayly decorated and drawn by men in bright costumes. At the palace and in the residences of noblemen special dances are performed, and wherever a shrine stands in honor of the god of prosperity (*Dai-koku*), cakes of rice flour are offered moistened with warm water called "the warm water of prosperity." The 3rd is regarded as the *fête* of the "three *Daishi*." Piously disposed people in Tokyo visit the Ueno temples and in Kyoto repair to Hiei-zan; but it must be confessed that the "mirror-opening" ceremony on the following day is observed with far more punctilio. It is on this day that the "mirror-dumplings" (*kagami-mochi*) which have hitherto stood on the "elysian table," and those that have been offered at the family altar (*kami-dana*), at the well and at the hearth, are cut up, fried with soy and eaten by every member of the household, though in truth the dish derives its relish rather from the season than from its own savor. At dusk on the 6th and at dawn on the 7th, a curious combination of cooking and incantation takes place. It is called "the chopping of the seven herbs." From the Nara epoch—that is to say, from the eighth century—it became customary that the Emperor, attended by the court nobles, should make an expedition to the hills on the "first day of the rat," in the first month, for the purpose of rooting up pine saplings and carrying them back to plant in the palace park. His Majesty thus brought home longevity, of which the pine had always been symbolical. At the same time, the leaves of spring plants were plucked, so that green youth might accompany length of years. It would be futile to attempt any description of the stately graces and elaborate ceremonial with which the Japanese can invest these acts in themselves so primitive. The transplanting of a baby pine, the gathering of a few



LOTUS POND IN TOKYO.

Lake Shinobazu at Ueno Park during the month of August.

tender leaves, are purposes so essentially paltry that to prelude them by sumptuous preparations and accompany them by solemn rites seems a grotesque solecism. But the most trivial aim derives dignity from the earnestness with which it is pursued, and the Japanese can be just as much in earnest about the lightest fancy as about the weightiest fact.

They know how to be picturesquely great in small things, and if the faculty is crushed hereafter by collision with the hard realities of Western civilization, the artistic world will be so much the poorer. During the first century of this pine-transplanting observance, its leaf-plucking adjunct was simply symbolical, but from the time of the Emperor Saga (813 A. D.) the practical precepts of Chinese traditions were adopted, and the leaves came to serve as seasoning for soup. Seven kinds had to be selected by those who aimed at strict orthodoxy, but common folks contented themselves with two. These they placed on a block, and with a large knife in each hand, chopped rhythmically to the seven-syllabled refrain:—

Toto no tori no
Nihon no tochi ni
Wataranu mae ni
Suto suto ton ton ton.

Birds of ill-hap pass us by,
Never here from China fly,
Flit and hop, flitting, hopping;
Chip a chop, chipping, chopping.

Here once more appear the birds of ill omen which we have seen the ample-hatted *Eta* maiden driving away with *samisen* strains on New Year's day. Their connection with the preparation of the "seven-herb" soup is an affair of sound, not sense. The Chinese were wont to rap on the doors of their houses for the purpose of scaring away these invisible visitors, and the Japanese have converted that profoundly sensible custom into a chorus which they chant to the accompaniment of the chopping knives, making a merry pastime out of even this primevally simple performance.

From the eighth day of the month business is resumed, and on the 11th, men of war make offerings of mirror dumplings to their armor, and practise archery, using a target big enough to avert the misfortune of opening the year with a bad record. On the 14th, the decorations of pine, bamboo and rope are removed and burned together, but in their place willow wands finely split into flower-like forms (*kezurihana*) are fixed to the eaves. Sometimes a bamboo basket is fixed on the roof to drive away demons. The cremation of the pine saplings and their companions is intended to drive away the mountain demons, who hate the crackle and sputter of fire, and to invite the cheerful principle while expelling the sad. The 15th is distinguished as the "chief-origin" day, and tradition requires that bean (*azuki*) broth should be eaten in every household, the bean being fatal to evil spirits. This day, too, and the 16th are servants' holidays. Men servants and women servants are allowed to visit their homes, a proceeding politely designated "the return of the rustics" (*yabuiiri*). The New Year's ceremonials are now nominally at an end. Indeed, they may be said to have terminated with the burning of the decorations. But there remains one observance never forgotten or curtailed. It belongs to the 20th, is called "the first face," and consists in offerings of rice dumplings (*mochi*) by the fair sex to their toilet mirrors, just as on the 11th the *samurai* makes a similar offering to his armor. While maids and matrons pay this vicarious homage to their own charms, merchants worship the deities of prosperity, Ebisu and Daikoku, the main feature of their worship being a display of profuse hospitality to friends and relatives: a veritable house-warming.

It will be observed that the gods do not play a very prominent part in Japan's New Year observances. People do not turn their feet to the temples, nor do the priests deliver sermons to large audiences. At the close of the month (24th and 25th), however, there is a faint revival of religious sentiment. The shrines of Yemma, the deity of Hades, are visited, and the more superstitious carry with them little wooden carvings of the bullfinch which they have carefully kept during the old year, and which they now exchange at the shrines for new effigies, thus divesting themselves of the burden of their sins of deceit during the past twelvemonth, and receiving a token of renewed sincerity and renewed expiation throughout the opening year. This is another example of those quaint plays upon words probably inevitable among people speaking a language like that of the Japanese. The name of the bullfinch (*uso*) is homonymous with the term "falsehood." Thus the idea of the worshipper is to hide in his sleeve—for the effigy of the bullfinch is thus carried—all the fibs and falsehoods of which he has been guilty throughout the old year, and to avert their evil results. But the singular fact is that he carries home from the shrine a new symbol of deception. He makes naïve admission that life cannot be lived without lying, whereby he thus avoids at least the lie of pretending to think that it can.¹ It must not be supposed, however, that his fresh bullfinch confers prospective absolution from the guilt of guile. No such idea is acknowledged, though it is easy to perceive that a mechanical device for periodically evading the consequences of deceit cannot fail to create a false conscience towards the fault.

Every year of the "ten-stem cycle," on which the almanac of old Japan was based, has a special point of the compass from which fortunate influences are supposed to emanate.

¹The festival of *Uso-kai* had its origin in Chikuzen province. There, beginning at a date no longer ascertainable, pious people inaugurated the custom of visiting the temple of Temman at the hour of the bird on the night of the 7th of January, and offering effigies of the *uso*. The priests distributed new effigies in exchange, and among the latter was one covered with gold foil. The devotee to whose lot this gilded bullfinch happened to fall counted himself secure for a year against all dangers or consequences of deception. In the beginning of the present century the custom was extended to Tokyo, where it is widely observed up to the present time. The wooden *uso* is carved from the sacred *sakaki* (*cleyera japonica*).



A PACK HORSE.

The god controlling those influences is called the "Year-luck Deity" (*Toshi-toku-jin*), and throughout the first month, sacred *saké* (*miki*) and rice dumplings are offered to this mysterious being at the domestic altar. There is, in truth, no more mysterious divinity in the Japanese pantheon—a divinity of doubtful sex, said by some to be the youngest daughter of the dragon king, whose palace is at the bottom of the sea, and described by others as a sort of steersman spirit who guides the sequence of the years through the changes of the compass points. The average Japanese wastes no more brain fibre over the enlightenment of these arcana than the average Christian does over the orthodoxy of the logos. It is a traditional part of the New Year's observances to fill with votive wine the sacred bottles (*on-miki-dokuri*) reserved for that purpose, and to flank them with plump dumplings of rice flour, just as it is a duty of joy to build up at the threshold pillars of longevity and an arch of sweet atmosphere.

There is little in the way of *fête* or pastime to distinguish the first half of the second month. The innumerable shrines of Inari throughout the country are thronged with worshippers on the first "day of the horse" (*hatsu-uma*), generally about the 2nd of the month; lights are placed in the pillar-lamps; flags are hoisted, and after praying for agricultural prosperity the people feast on "red rice" (*seki-han*), the invariable dish at seasons of congratulation. This day, also, used to be counted specially auspicious for the commencement of children's studies, but modern civilization has severed the old-fashioned connection between education and the cycles of stems and signs. Still, however, there are housewives so conservative of tradition that only on the second day of the second month will they consent to engage a new woman-servant, such having been the ancient rule. Agents (*keiwan*) for the hire of domestic servants constitute a numerous and for the most part an unscrupulous class. Their occupation includes also letting and selling of houses and lands, but recourse to their services is avoided as much as possible by respectable folks. They depend for their fees on the success of the business intrusted to them, and it is well understood that female servants may be "procured" from a *keiwan* for purposes other than domestic employment.

The first fifteen days of the second month are known as the time of the "insects' tremor" (*ket-chitsu*); the second fifteen as the "spring equinox" (*shun-bun*). It is supposed that the insects which have lain dormant throughout the winter feel the touch of spring, and start in their sleep, preluding the bursting of the plum blossoms, which takes place from the 15th. Visits to the plum forests mark the beginning of the year's open-air *fêtes*. Appreciation of natural beauties is a sense that has attained extraordinary development in Japan. It is independent of social refinement or philosophical education. The blacksmith's apprentice and the scullery maid welcome the advent of the flower time as rapturously as do the dilettante and the noble dame. In the case of the plum there are features that appeal with special force to the æsthetic instincts of the people. The gnarled, age-worn aspect of the gloomy tree contrasts so powerfully with the fresh softness of its pearl-like blossoms, and the absence of

PLANTING A RICE FIELD.

No other grain or plant requires so much care as rice. About nine-tenths of the agricultural land in Japan is devoted to this crop. All farming land is irrigated by a system that is a thousand years old. The rice is sown thickly in small patches, which may be termed nurseries. In June the young shoots are transplanted and placed at greater distances from each other, and the fields are then full of men and women working knee-deep in mud and water. The harvesting is done in October. Japanese rice is the best in the world and brings a higher price than any other; therefore it is largely exported and the cheaper product of China, India and Korea is imported for home consumption.







leaves so enhances the sanguine temerity of the fragile flowers that the Japanese discover in this effort of nature a hundred allegories pointing the victory of hope over despair, the renewal of vigor among decay, the triumph of fortune over the blight of adversity. A library might be filled with the verselets that have been composed in honor of the plum flowers and suspended from the branches of favorite trees in the groves to which all classes of the people flock at this season.

We have spoken of battle-board and shuttlecock, kite-flying and archery as sports considered specially appropriate to the New Year, but there are other games which, though not limited to any particular period, are naturally played with exceptional zest at that time. Football used to be one of them; but the old-fashioned *ke-mari*, imported from China a dozen centuries ago, has now been completely ousted by its Occidental representative. The essence of the sport, as practised in China and Japan, was to kick the ball as high as possible and to keep it always in flight. There were no goals, no organized systems of assault and defence, and the pastime was essentially aristocratic. Hand-ball (*te-mari*) is the corresponding amusement of the gentle sex. The reader must not imagine anything in the nature of English "fives." Hand-ball, as the Japanese girl plays it, is a combination of refined dexterity and graceful movement. The ball is struck perpendicularly on the ground, and the player performs a complete pirouette in time to strike it again as it rebounds. Sometimes she meets it at the summit of its bound and arrests it for a second on the back of her fingers before reversing her hand and striking the ball downwards again preparatory to a new pirouette; sometimes she makes it leap so high that she can pirouette twice before it springs again from the ground, and, all the while, she and her companions chant a song in unison with these lithe



THE MAPLE GARDEN AT TOKYO.

movements. Victory depends upon not letting the ball escape beyond the range of circle and stroke, but victors and vanquished alike have the satisfaction of displaying to the full that "eloquence of form" which constitutes the speech of the coquette. There are other methods of playing the game, but they need not occupy our attention here; unless, indeed,

we make an exception in favor of *o-te-dama*, which has for its paraphernalia three, five or seven tiny rectangular bags filled with small beans, and which demands only a fraction of the exertion required by *te-mari* proper. To tell how these miniature bags are manipulated would call for two or three pages of text and two or three scores of illustration. But if any lady has a beautiful hand and arm, a supple wrist, a quick eye and muscles capable of nice adjustment, the Japanese accomplishment of *o-te-dama* deserves her serious attention.

To this context, also, belongs *sugo-roku*, or the "ranging of sixes," which, though it includes the demoralizing element of dice, is of all indoor pastimes the most generally affected in Japan. The "race game," familiar in Europe and America, is so closely akin to Japanese *sugo-roku* that it is difficult to doubt their common parentage. There is a broad sheet divided into lettered or pictorial sections, from one to another of which the player progresses according to the number thrown by him with a single die. The game is said to have had its origin in India,¹ whence it found its way to Japan in the eighth century. At first it was prohibited on account of its gambling character, but eventually the Buddhist priests took it up and converted it into an instrument for inculcating virtue. An illustrated ladder of moral tenets, varied by immoral laches, led to heaven or precipitated into hell, and young people were expected to derive a vicarious respect for the ethical precepts that marked the path to victory. The game thenceforth became a vehicle of instruction as well as amusement, its pictures representing sometimes official grades or religious terms. A cognate amusement, without the use of dice, is the "poem card" game (*uta-garuta*). This, as its name *karuta*—a Japanese rendering of the Spanish word *carta*—suggests, is partly of foreign origin. Before their contact with the West, the Japanese had a pastime called "poem shells"—*uta-kai*, or *kai-awase*,—the precursor of "poem cards." In its earliest day, this amusement consisted simply in joining the shells of a bivalve. A number of shells, twenty, thirty or more, constituted the pack, from which one was taken by each player, the remainder being spread on the mats to form a "deck." The player's object was to find the mate of the shell dealt to him. By and by, as the game received aristocratic patronage, shells of special beauty were selected, carefully polished and placed in circular boxes of rich gold lacquer, which figured among the furniture of every refined lady's boudoir. Then a new feature was added: the affinity of two shells was indicated by inscribing on one the first half of some celebrated couplet, and on the other the second half. The writing of poetry—or to speak more accurately, the knack of expressing some pretty fancy in metrical form—had a place among the essential accomplishments of an educated lady or gentleman in Japan, and involved intimate acquaintance with all the classical gems in that field of literature. It is easy to see, therefore, that these "poem shells" became at once a source of pleasure and of instruction. The Portuguese, coming in the sixteenth century, brought with them playing cards as well as Christianity and firearms.

¹ Japanese tradition says that it was invented by an Indian prince during a period of imprisonment. The hybrid nature of the name *sugo-roku* indicates a foreign origin.

Strange to say, however, though the Japanese welcomed the cards, they rejected the foreign manner of using them, and devised a game of their own, which may be compared to whist, but is, on the whole, more complicated and difficult. It is called "flower joining" (*hana-awase*). We must refrain from any attempt to explain its intricate processes here, merely noting the essentially Japanese feature, namely, that every card bears a representation of some flower, with the name and appearance of which the player must be familiar. Cards are also substituted for shells in the "poem shell" pastime described above, and these *uta-garuta* (poem cards) occupy in the repertoire of feminine and youthful pastimes the same place that the difficult game of *hana-awase* holds among the amusements of men. In Japanese estimation, however, no game supports comparison for a moment with that of *go*, to which foreign translators give the misleading name "checkers," though it bears about the same relation to checkers as *vingt-et-un* does to whist. There is probably no other game in the world that demands such analytical insight and genius for combination. Every educated man plays *go*, but very few develop sufficient skill to be classed in one of the nine grades of experts, and not once in a century does a player succeed in obtaining the diploma of the ninth or highest grade. The board and men—small, round counters of shell, ivory or stone—used for playing *go* serve also for a pastime called *gomoku-narabe*, or "five in a row," a simple amusement, affected by girls and children, and mistaken by many foreigners for *go* itself, with which it has no manner of connection. Chess (*shogi*), too, is very popular. It is cognate with the "royal game" of the Occident, but there are 36 pieces instead of 32, and the board has 81 squares instead of 64. On the other hand, though the movements and names of the pieces resemble those of their Western representatives, their powers are not so large, and it has consequently been inferred that the Japanese game is simpler than the Occidental. The inference is probably erroneous, for any element of simplicity due to the reduced power of the pieces is compensated by their greater number, and by the fact that, at a certain stage, pieces previously won or lost reappear in a combination. A form of chess to which the



DANCING-CART.

Used in street processions on occasions of religious festivals.

term applies only by courtesy—namely, *tsume-shogi*, or the imprisonment of one freely-moving piece by several others of very restricted power—is much played by the lower orders.

Are the Japanese a gambling people? The answer must be no and yes. Gambling has never been practised in Japan on a scale commensurate with European records. Such an incident as the ruin of an educated man by cards and dice is comparatively rare. The game of *hana-awase*, spoken of above, might be expected to attain the rank held by whist or piquet in Europe and America, and thus to become a recognized amusement in refined circles. But a certain measure of discredit has always attached to it. Cards are not among the recognized pastimes of polite society, and the card-player is counted a *mauvais sujet* in a serious sense. "Poem cards" and *sugo-roku* are, of course, considered perfectly innocent: no betting is connected with them. But players of *hana-awase* sometimes put up large stakes, and repair to tea-houses and restaurants to carry on the game in secret. These, however, are invariably young folks who have not yet concluded the sowing of their wild oats. A man of mature years who devotes his evenings to such doings recognizes himself as a vicious person. Certain sections of the lower orders, on the other hand, are not restrained by any sentiment of self-respect in this matter. Grooms, drawers of *jinrikisha* and carries of *kago*¹ often while away the intervals of their toil with a game of cards, and stake their hardly earned coins on the result. One may occasionally see a group of these men huddled together in some out-of-the-way corner and rapt in their illicit pursuit, while one of their number stands sentinel to watch for the coming of a constable. The law is very strict. Whenever and wherever he is observed, the card-player for money may be arrested. There must be distinct evidence, however, that money changes hands. Gambling-houses do not exist and never have existed. The three-card man, the hunt-the-pea artist, and the roulette board are not seen at public *fêtes*. They would be promptly "run in." But the professional gambler does exist. So far as his art is concerned, he is generally a poor species of ruffian. Loaded dice and sufficient sleight of hand to substitute them for the legitimate ivories are his stock in trade. There is no scope for skill nor any redeeming doctrine of chances and probabilities. Youths with money or expectations are enticed into the society of these professionals and robbed until they are no longer worth robbing. Still the field for exercising talent so rudimentary is very limited. The gambler, therefore, moulds himself on finer lines. He is an accomplished man of the world; a charming companion; fatally versed in all the intricacies of *hana-awase* and competent to supplement skill by art. He frequents fashionable tea-houses and inveigles pleasure-seekers into little games with costly results. It may be objected

¹A vehicle for seating one person. Shortly described, the *kago* consists of a flat, circular seat held between bamboo V's which are slung from a horizontal pole. The pole is carried on the shoulders of the men. The *kago* was the principal means of transport before the days of the *jinrikisha* (a species of perambulator with shafts), and is still used in mountainous districts where wheel traffic is difficult. A more aristocratic conveyance than the *kago* is the *nori-mono*, which resembles a little house with its ridge pole prolonged so as to be capable of resting on men's shoulders. The *nori-mono* is sometimes richly lacquered and elaborately decorated. It is furnished with fine bamboo blinds, so that the inmate can enjoy privacy. In modern times, the *nori-mono* has come to serve as a hearse at the funerals of the poor.

that these sharpers must speedily become known to the owners of tea-houses. So they do, but that does not much inconvenience them. The professional gamblers in the great cities organize themselves into cliques and obey a code of rigorous regulations. The domain of a clique, its "rope-stretch" (*nawa-bari*), varies in area: sometimes it is limited to one ward; sometimes, in the case of a guild-master with a specially "current face," its authority extends over half the city. But, wide or narrow, each domain is inviolable: no professional from without ventures to trespass unless he has obtained a "pass" (*watari*) from the guild-master. Every breach of the law other than card-sharping or the use of loaded dice, or some other measure adopted with the authority of the guild and in its interests, is strictly tabooed and, if detected, is punished by the guild with exemplary severity. It is easy to understand that keepers of tea-houses venturing to pit themselves against such organizations, may have their business crippled. The tea-house itself cannot always show a clean record. It is often a place of assignation; it fosters within its precincts vices which, if discovered, would involve its ruin. Therefore, in order to live himself, the proprietor is fain to let the professional gambler live also, and to make what he can out of him. Vice battens on vice. The detective police are sharp enough, but not incorruptible. That they sometimes take pay from the "wait-and-meet tea-house" and from the professional gambler also, is undoubted. So far as these things go—and they are here set down in their worst guise—there is gambling in Japan. But the evil flourishes in holes and corners and within very narrow limits. Thus far it has never infected society; never attained the dimensions of an epidemic.

Numerical symmetry has always possessed a charm for the Japanese, and may, perhaps, be chiefly responsible for the fact that during many centuries they have specially fêted

the 3rd day of the third month, the 5th of the fifth, the 7th of the seventh and the 9th of the ninth. These four days, together with the 7th day of the first month, constitute the *go-sekku*, or "five festivals of the seasons." There is a weird and fanciful legend which connects the five celebrations with the story of an ox-headed incarnation of Buddha, who



KAGO BEARERS.

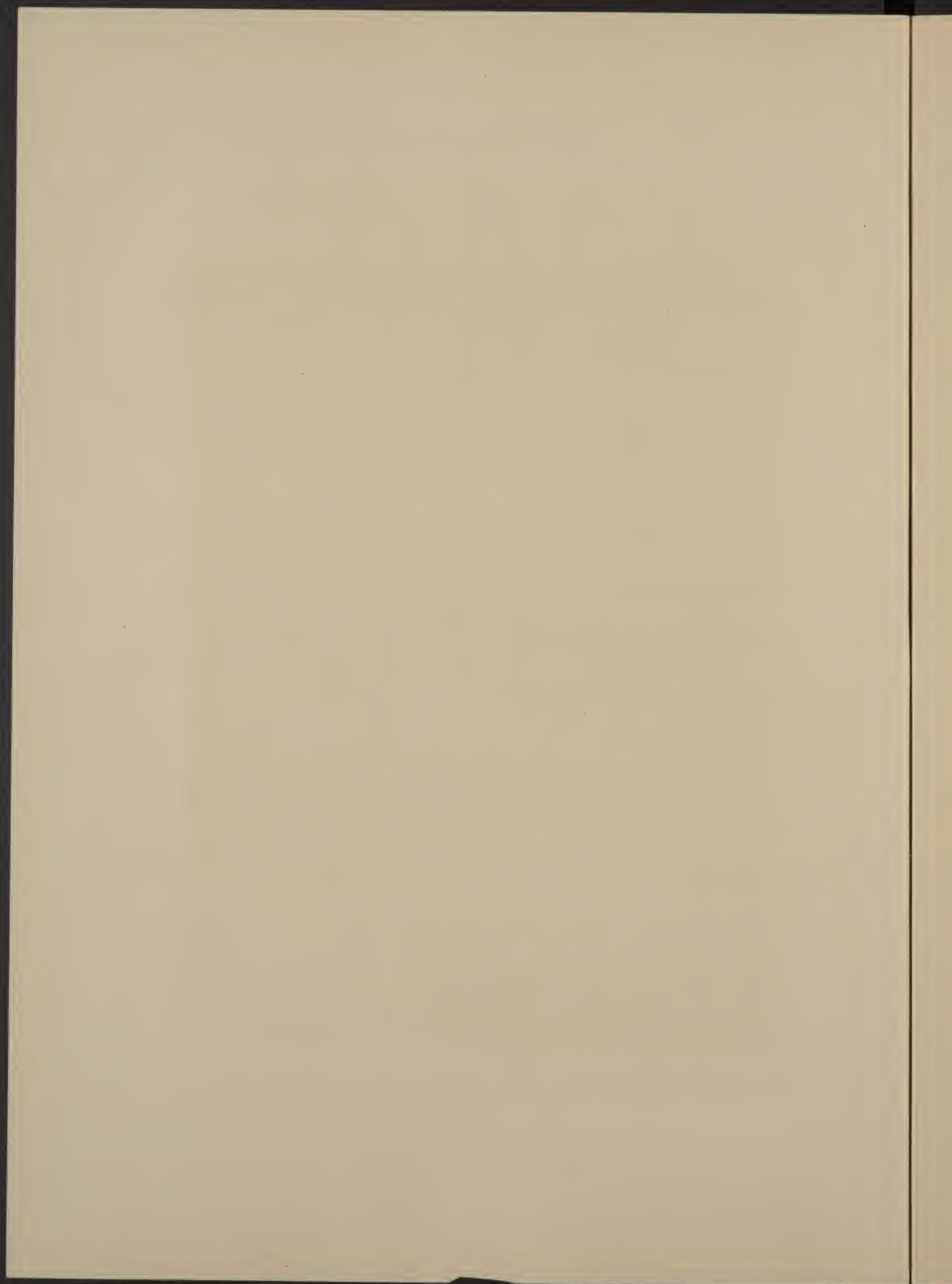
For description see footnote on page 262.

married the youngest daughter of the dragon king, and subsequently carved into five pieces the body of a prince who had opposed his quest for a wife; but the fabrication of this grew-some tale evidently succeeded the birth of the custom for which it professes to account. The celebration on the 3rd day of the third month is commonly called the *hina-matsuri*, or dolls' festival. It is the *fête* of little maidens, and their manner of celebrating it is to marshal a multitude of dolls representing historical characters, with their vassals, servitors, soldiers, equipages and paraphernalia. Incredible care and sometimes great expense are lavished on the preparation of these toys. Every detail is studiously exact, whether of costume, of armor, of arms, of head-dress and foot-gear, of camp or palace furniture, of utensils for cooking and for feasting, of arrangements for wedding ceremonies and state progresses. Sometimes the figures and their accessories number as many as from five hundred to a thousand articles, and the work of setting them out is a delight of days' duration, no less than a liberal education in the customs and etiquette of refined life. In every house offerings are made of white *saké* and herb cake (*kusa-mochi*), that is to say, cake made of rice flour mixed with leaves of the artemisia (*yomogi*), or of "mother-and-child" shrub (*haha-ko-gusa*). Of course costly collections of *o-hina-sama*, or "honorable effigies," as the little maidens call them, are preserved from generation to generation, descending from mother to daughter. But the demand for new ones gives employment to a considerable body of artists, and during the week that precedes the *fête* day, a busy market is held in such quarters of the capital cities as from time immemorial have been counted the chief emporia of these elaborate toys; for example, Nakabashi, Owari-cho and Jikkendama in Tokyo; Shijo and Gojo in Kyoto, and Mido-maye and Junkei-cho in Osaka. So soon as the *fête* is over, the *o-hina-sama* are packed away in silk and wadding, not to see the light again until the third month of the following year. There is no doubt that the idea of this dolls' festival came from China, but the development that it received after its adoption by the Japanese amounts to complete metamorphosis. The Chinese conception was that the first "serpent-day" (called *jō-nichi*, or "expulsion day") in the third month should be devoted to exorcising the evil influences to which each person is individually exposed. For that purpose an exorcist supplied a paper puppet, with which the recipient rubbed his body. This *nade-mono* (lit. rubbing thing) was then returned to the exorcist, who performed certain rites over it. By and by it became customary to range the *nade-mono* of a household on a shelf with offerings of wine and food, and out of that habit grew the *o-hina-sama*. It is a record fairly illustrating the changes undergone by the customs of the East-Asian continent after transplantation to Japanese soil.

Tradition says that when Sakyamuni was born a dragon appeared and poured water over the babe. The incident is commemorated in Japan on the 4th day of the fourth month, when the "washing of Buddha" (*kwan-butsu* or *yoku-butsu*) takes place. An image of the god—a birthday Buddha (*tanjō-butsu*)—is set up in a hall decorated with flowers, and each worshipper pours water or *amacha* (a decoction of hydrangea leaves) over the effigy from a

NI-Ō.

The "Two Dêva Kings," Indra and Brahma, keep guard at the outer gates of temples to scare away demons. Each bears in his hand the *tokko*, a religious sceptre, symbolizing the irresistible power of prayer, meditation and incantation. These figures are of gigantic size and are usually bespattered with moistened paper pellets thrown against them by devotees, who think thus to learn whether or not their prayers will receive favorable attention. If the pellet adheres they are reassured, but if not they resign themselves to disappointment.







tiny ladle. This being a temple rite does not evoke much enthusiasm, but evidences of its popular observance may be seen in decorations of azalea sprays, *shikimi* boughs and *u* (*deutzia scrabra*) blossoms set up at the gates of houses. As usual, the idea of averting evil dictates the procedure of the time. Worms are the special object of exorcism. A leaf of shepherd's purse (*nazuna*) is tied inside the lantern of the sleeping-chamber, and over the lintel is pasted an amulet¹ written with ink which has been moistened with the liquid of lustration (*amacha*). Again the rice-flour cake is offered at the domestic altar. It now takes the form of a lotus petal with capsule of bean-paste (*an*). In the cities hucksters go about selling



THE NEW ROAD TO MIYANOSHITA.

An ascent of 1400 feet in a distance of 3¼ miles. A charming ride in jinrikisha through a wild mountain gorge.

ing ducks' eggs, which, eaten on this day, are supposed to be efficacious against palsy; and occasionally itinerant priests with close-cropped hair and a peculiar costume pass from street to street calling out *o-shaka! oshaka!* or "Buddhas to sell, Buddhas to buy," and performing buffoon tricks to gaping crowds. The stock in trade of these *gwannin-bo* (depraved priests) consists of little images of Sakyamuni and five-colored flags of the *u* flower, the whole carried ignominiously in common water-pails.

The fourth month of the old calendar, the May of modern times, is distinguished above all other months as the season of flowers. It is then that the cherry blooms, and in Japanese eyes the cherry flower typifies everything that is at once refined, beautiful and vigorous. The blossom itself has no special excellence: it is as cherry blossoms are everywhere. But by massing the trees in positions that lend themselves to a *coup d'œil*, by arching them over long avenues beside broad rivers, and by setting them in a framework of exquisite scenery, there are produced glowing effects and harmonious contrasts which, enhanced by the opalescent atmosphere of a Japanese spring, are worthy of the passionate enthusiasm they arouse. It has been sometimes asserted, sometimes denied, that a keener love of flowers and a more subtle sense of their beauties exist, either by instinct or by educa-

¹The formula inscribed on this paper is curiously simple:— "The 4th of the fourth month is an auspicious day for killing *kamisagenushi*" (larvæ of the meat fly).

tion, among these Far-Eastern people than can be found anywhere else. Those who take the affirmative view point to the vast crowds of men, women and children that throng the cherry groves during the short season of bloom; to the universality of this affectionate admiration, as potent to draw the gray-headed statesman or the philosopher from his studio as to attract lads and lasses on the threshold of life and love; to the familiar acquaintance with flowers and their habits that is possessed even by artisans and scavengers; and to the fact that the Japanese manage to derive much wider gratification from flowers and to utilize them more effectively as factors of public pleasure than any other nation does. In the science of horticulture they rank far below Europeans and Americans. They had practically no knowledge of botany until they acquired it from the West. Their gardens have never included conservatories of rare exotics. It has not occurred to them to organize competitive flower-shows in the Occidental fashion, and nature has bequeathed to them only a small portion of the floral wealth with which England, France and the United States are dowered. Yet they have made so much of their comparatively scanty gifts that the blossoms of each season are a feature in their lives, a prime element in their happiness. If they possessed the laburnum, the lilac, the hawthorn, the gorse, the bluebell, the snowdrop, the honeysuckle, the jessamine, the primrose and all the other "letters of the angel tongue" written on the fair faces of some Western countries, it is possible, indeed, that the keenness of their appreciation might have been dulled by satiety; but, judging by the facts as we find them, the strong probability is that they would have taught the world new ways of profiting by these gifts of nature. Certainly they stand alone among nations in so far as concerns the public organization of their taste for flowers and the universal fidelity with which they gratify it. We shall not pause here to describe the cherry *fêtes* of Tokyo, Kyoto and other Japanese cities. In former times, when the patrician stood above the law, and when the disguise of an eye-mask — an "eye-wig" as it was jocosely called — sufficed to justify almost any license, these motley crowds were sometimes unwilling witnesses of rude practical jokes. But the policeman's baton is now more potent than the *samurai's* sword, and beyond the discord of a vinous refrain, or, perhaps, entanglement in a group of erratic roisterers, the peaceful citizen has nothing to apprehend. Boat-races on the Sumida River in Tokyo and athletic sports in the parks are features of this month, but such things are modern innovations and do not yet rank higher than second-rate imitations of their Occidental models. Reference may be made *en passant* to a pretty but now obsolete pastime associated with this season, the game of "water windings" (*kyoku-sui*). It had its origin in China and obtained great vogue at one time among the aristocrats of Japanese society, but the age has passed it by. A cup of wine launched upon a stream was suffered to float at the caprice of the current, and verselets were composed before it came within reach of the convives posted along the banks. A trivial pastime in truth, but it is in the genius of the Japanese to make much of slender resources.

There is another kind of picnic which survives all changes of fashion, and attracts

pleasure-seekers in as great numbers now as it did a hundred years ago. It may be seen at its best in Tokyo. On certain days in May and early June, when the spring tides recede from the shallow reaches along the southern suburb of the city, large spaces of weed-covered sand emerge from the water, and adjacent to them the sea spreads a covering only a few inches deep over wide areas where shell-fish congregate. The days when nature behaves in that manner are marked with a red letter in the citizen's calendar. Engagements that must wait weeks or even months for fulfilment, engagements to gather shells in company, are formed between persons of all ages, green lads and lasses, men and women in middle life, and old folks to whom the spring airs no longer bring more than a fitful suggestion of "light fancies." These pleasure-seekers launch themselves in the favorite vehicle of Tokyo picnics, the *yane-bune*,—a kind of gondola,—and float seaward with the ebbing tide, singing snatches of song the while to the accompaniment of tinkling *samisen*, or of that graceful game *ken*,¹ so well devised to display the charms of a pretty hand and arm. Such outings differ in one important respect from the more orthodox picnics of Tokyo folks,—the visits to plum-blossoms, cherry blossoms, peony beds, chrysanthemum puppets, iris ponds and river openings. They differ in the fact that there is no display of fine apparel. Bright and skilfully blended colors there are indeed; but the embroidered girdle, the elaborately woven robe of silk crêpe, the dainty armlet and the costly hairpin are absent. Camlets and cottons constitute the proper costume of the day, and a pretty air of business resolution replaces the leisurely archness generally characteristic of the budding damsel in Japan.

To two articles of apparel only do the ladies give special heed. Of these, the more important is the petticoat, if such a misleading and commonplace term may be applied to the closely fitting underskirt of Japanese habiliments—the *yumoji*, a broad band of silk, folded around the body and reaching from the waist to a little below the knee. In the vast majority of cases the color of this item of clothing is crimson. Its glowing uniformity may, however, be varied by sundry devices, from an almost imperceptible sprig pattern of darker hue to wonders of deft weaving and happy caprice, and a quick-eyed ethnologist may look to see much exercise of tasteful coquetry in the *yumoji* that grace the suburban shell-beds of Tokyo at spring-tide picnics. The second article demanding and receiving unusual care is nothing more or less than a towel. Here again we are perplexed by the paucity of our Anglo-Saxon language. "Petticoat" may pass for *yumoji*, *faute de mieux*, but to speak of the *tenugui* (literally "hand wiper") as a towel is to convey a very false impression of the little blue-and-white linen kerchief which these shell-seeking ladies twist into the daintiest coiffures conceivable, not so much to shade their complexions as to preserve the gloss and symmetry of the achievements that their hair-dressers have turned out for the occasion. The

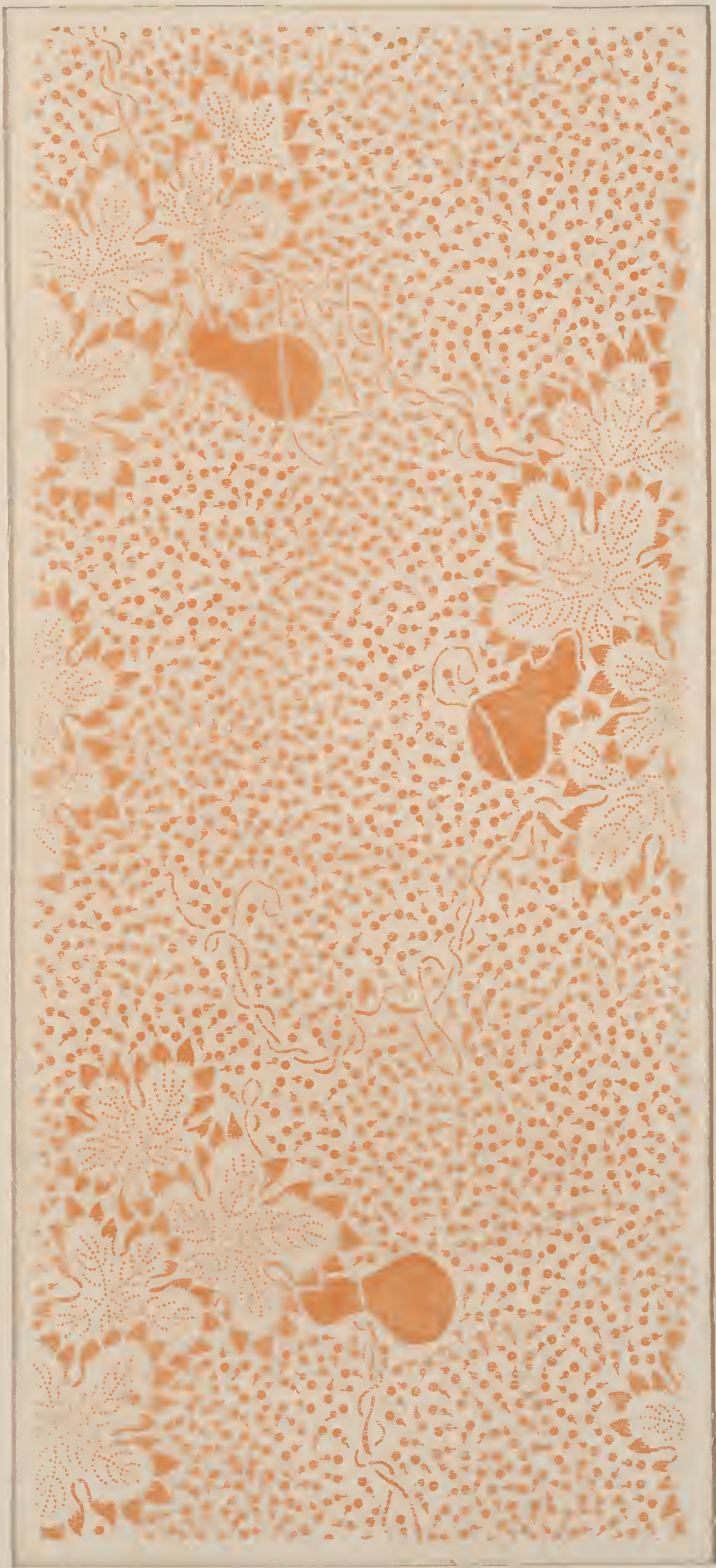
¹ This game, probably more widely played than any other in Japan, depends upon the principle that certain objects, animate or inanimate, correspond to certain combinations of the fingers, and that the objects thus represented have relative values. The players clap and wave their hands in unison with some rhythmic chant, and mark the pauses of the rhythm by these digital combinations. There is an almost endless variety of methods, and the graceful dexterity displayed by experts is most charming.

water, as has been said, is only a few inches deep, but a few inches mean much when skirts have to be kept from dabbling in the brine and arms must be free for a plunge above the elbow. It will be understood, therefore, that the shell-beds gleam with such a display of white ankles as would shock a prude. But prudery is not among the paraphernalia taken to sea on these occasions. The Japanese are nothing if not natural, and when the business of the moment demands certain concessions, no one is supposed to look beyond the necessity. But in truth it may be safely said that delicacy and modesty are less outraged at the *shio-hi* in Tokyo than in many an Occidental salon. The wide sleeves of the upper garment are restrained by a cord (*tasuki*) crossed over the breast and back; the skirts are tucked under the inner girdle, and in that guise merry girls and women paddle about, groping in the soft sand that closes over their white feet and picking up shell-fish of many kinds in considerable quantities. Grown men, middle-aged men and even old men do not disdain to join the fun, and seem to find genuine pleasure and excitement in delving after hidden crustacea, while the sea breeze whispers of luncheon, and toys with the crimson *yumoji* of the gentle gleaners. Luncheon, of course, is a special feature of these outings; for in each boat there is a little furnace piled with glowing charcoal, and on this the captured shell-fish crack and sputter, until, sweetened by a drop of soy at the proper moment, they become a delicacy fit for any palate. Then there is leisurely drifting homewards on the bosom of the rising tide, with faces that have imbibed the sun's glow and limbs that retain a pleasantly languid sense of recent exertion.



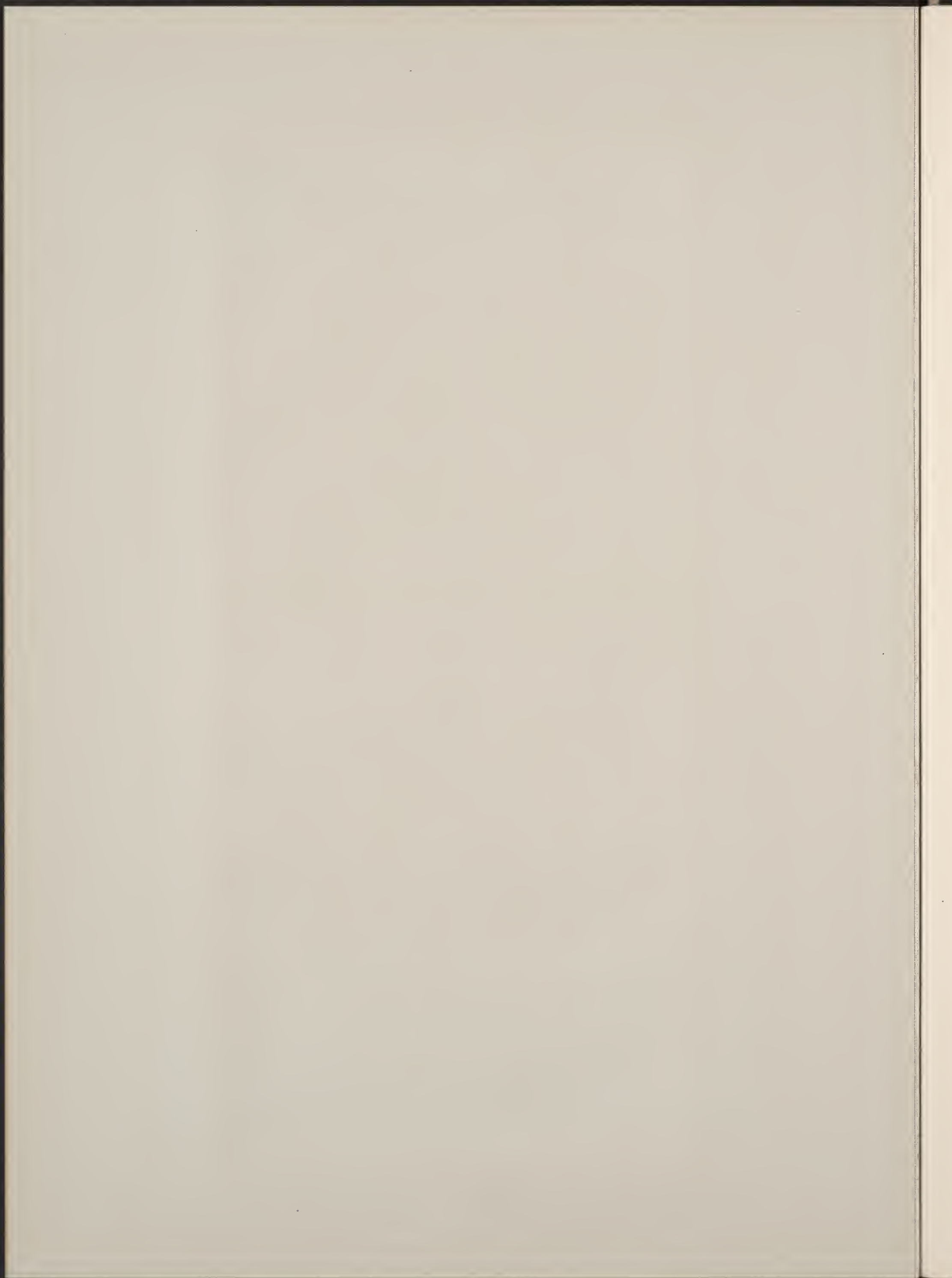
CREEK-SIDE, YOKOHAMA.

Within the limits of the foreign settlement.









A PAINTING OF THE KANO SCHOOL.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

A PAINTING OF THE KANO SCHOOL.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

The purest ideal of the Zen priests was not the only source of inspiration to the Ashikaga artists, for the art and literature of the early Ming had begun to exert their influence on Japanese life. The Tartar conquerors of China have indeed crushed the whole fabric of her time-honored civilization, and have disabled her to the present day from recovering her greatness. Yet the rise of the native dynasty of Ming was an attempt at revival, and for a time fused the scattered remains into a new national mould, destined, alas, to be trampled again by the northern horsemen. The mode of reconstruction was necessarily eclectic; they borrowed philosophy from Sung, and poetry from Tan. Opportunities were not also wanting to find a common ground between the rival tenets of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, as different expressions of the same truth.

The accompanying plate by a Kano artist owes its subject to this phase of thought. It represents the members of the three schools discussing the contents of a large vase of vinegar—the emblem of human life. The Confucian with prosaic fortitude pronounces it sour, the Buddhist bewails its bitterness, while the Taoist philosopher extols its sweetness. Of course such a cold liberalism could not but grow on the ruins of fallen ideals and faded faith. Nor were reasons lacking to drive national pride and religious devotion out of men's hearts. The foreign yoke, black with Tartar tyranny, and the elaborate corruption of indolent society, led poetry into the path of wild fantasy. Art fled from man to nature, and in the purity of ink landscapes or the graceful spray of bamboos and pines, sought and found her asylum. These masterpieces, for which Japan afforded a ready market during the continental disturbances, were eagerly collected by the princely amateurs, and gave a color to the Ashikaga art.

Among the numerous artists who imbibed this new movement, Kano Masanobu and his two sons stand very prominent as founders of the school of Kano. This artist family is not only remarkable for its unbroken descent of four centuries, but for the individual geniuses which the house produced at each new wave of art development, thus enabling it to always maintain its pre-eminence. Under Taiko, it was Kano Yeitoku who with his numerous pupils decorated the gorgeous halls of the new nobility, and the great names of Kano Tanyin and Tsunenobu lend their lustre to the solemn court of the early Tokugawas. Even in our contemporary art, we owe much to the genius of Hōgai and Hashimoto, the last representatives of this illustrious school.

But in spite of the various changes, the spirit of the Kano school has always been essentially Ashikaga, and it is, *par excellence*, the art of the military aristocracy since that period. The adjoining plate is by Utanosuke, the second son of Masanobu, and is a good example of the figure pieces of the early Kanos.

Okakura Kakuzō





